

**THE CAPE REBEL OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN WAR,
1899-1902**

by

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DECLARATION

I hereby certify that this research is the result of my own investigation which has not already been accepted in substance for any other degree and is not being submitted in candidature for any other degree.

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation investigates the role of a group of Cape colonists who rose in rebellion against the colonial government and allied themselves to the Boer Republics during the South African War of 1899-1902.

The decision of the Griqualand West colonists to join the Republican forces took place against a background of severe deprivation in the agricultural sector due to the losses sustained in the rinderpest pandemic of 1896/1897. It also coincided with the invasion of Griqualand West by Transvaal forces. The failure of the Schreiner Government to defend its borders encouraged rebellion, as there were no armed forces to oppose either the invasion or the rebellion.

While some of the Cape rebels fought on the side of the Republicans during major battles along the Modder River, others were commandeered to gather and transport supplies to the laagers. Four months after the surrender of Gen P Cronjé at Paardeberg the majority of these rebels had laid down arms except for those under Gen Piet de Villiers who fought on in the Transvaal. After a second rebellion in 1901, far fewer rebels fought a war of attrition north of the Orange River; eventually about 700 men leaving the Cape Colony to avoid laying down arms.

South of the Orange River Free State forces commandeered the disaffected colonists of the Stormberg and Colesberg regions in November 1899. Because the Republicans had not occupied these regions earlier in the war, British reinforcements and the Colonial Division took to the field against them almost immediately. The victory gained at Stormberg in December 1899 by the Boer forces was not followed up. Olivier failed to integrate his forces; unlike those at Colesberg where the Boers were far better led and scored some notable successes. The Republican burghers withdrew from the Cape Colony in March 1901, which in turn led to a mass surrender of rebels. Those that were captured under arms were sent as POWs to Ceylon and India, while those that surrendered were held in colonial gaols until they were bailed or given passes. Only a few hundred continued to wage war in the Boer Republics for the remainder of 1900.

The second invasion by Free State forces into the Cape Colony consisted of mobile commandos that criss-crossed the interior. For the first few months they sowed havoc, but after June 1901 the military used mass tactics against those who were forced into the isolated northwest Cape. In 1902, unknown to them, the Boer republics signed the Treaty of Vereeniging and ceased to exist as sovereign states. The Cape rebels were not signatories to the treaty. According to an agreement between the Boer leaders and

the Colonial Office, if a rebel surrendered and pleaded guilty to High Treason under Proclamation 100 of 1902 he would receive a partial amnesty and be disfranchised. However rebel officers were charged in court and fines and prison sentences would be handed down.

After the first invasion rebels who were captured or surrendered were tried under the Indemnity and Special Tribunals Act that was in force for six months until April 1901. Martial Law was then again in vogue from 22 April until Peace at the end of May 1902, and under this act 44 Cape colonists, Republicans and aliens were executed, and hundreds of others, whose death sentences were commuted to penal servitude for life, were shipped to POW camps on Bermuda and St Helena. The surrenders of 3,442 rebels were accepted under Proclamation 100 of 1902. Rebel officers or those facing serious charges were tried under the Indemnity and Special Tribunals Act in Special High Treason Courts. The general amnesty announced in 1905 brought to an end the prosecutions for High Treason of Cape rebels. In 1906 the names of disfranchised colonists were replaced on the Voters' Roll.

The final official return of Cape rebels for 1903 is 12,205 or 0.5% of the total population, while the return according to the database is 16,198 rebels or 0.7%. Strategically the rebellions played a limited role in the overall Republican war effort despite the individual rebel's self-sacrifice to the cause. However, although small in numbers, the rebellion had an enormous impact on colonial life (especially in 1901) as it led to a thinly disguised civil war and enmity between the Afrikaner and English colonists, which took years to disappear.

OPSOMMING

In hierdie verhandeling word die rol nagevors van 'n groep Kaapse koloniste wat teen die koloniale regering gerebelleer en hulle as bondgenote by die Boererepublieke geskaar het gedurende die Suid-Afrikaanse Oorlog van 1899-1902.

Die besluit van die koloniste van Griekwaland-Wes om by die Republikeinse magte aan te sluit het plaasgevind teen die agtergrond van ernstige ontbering in die landbousektor weens verliese gely met die runderpes-pandemie van 1896/1897. Dit het ook saamgeval met die inval van Griekwaland-Wes deur Transvaalse magte. Die versuim van die Schreiner-regering om sy grense te verdedig het rebellie bevorder, aangesien daar geen gewapende magte was om óf die inval óf die rebellie teen te staan nie.

Sommige van die Kaapse rebelle het aan die kant van die Republikeine geveg tydens belangrike veldslae langs die Modderrivier, terwyl ander opgekommandeer is om voorrade te versamel en na die laers te vervoer. Vier maande na die oorgawe van Gen. P. Cronjé by Paardeberg het die meeste van hierdie rebelle die wapens neergelê, behalwe diegene onder Gen. Piet de Villiers wat aanhou veg het in die Transvaal. Na 'n tweede rebellie in 1901 het 'n veel kleiner getal rebelle 'n uitputtingsoorlog noord van die Oranjerivier gevoer; uiteindelik ongeveer 700 mans wat die Kaapkolonie verlaat het sodat hulle nie hul wapens hoef neer te lê nie.

Suid van die Oranjerivier het Vrystaatse magte die ontevrede koloniste van die Stormberg- en Colesberg-streke in November 1899 opgekommandeer. Omdat die Republikeine nie vroeër in die oorlog hierdie gebiede beset het nie, het Britse versterkings en die Koloniale Divisie feitlik dadelik teen hulle te velde getrek. Die Boeremagte se oorwinning by Stormberg in Desember 1899 is nie opgevolg nie. Olivier het nie daarin geslaag om sy magte te integreer nie, anders as by Colesberg waar die Boere veel beter aangevoer was en aansienlike suksesse behaal het. Die Republikeinse burgers het in Maart 1901 uit die Kaapkolonie onttrek, wat 'n massa-oorgawe van rebelle tot gevolg gehad het. Diegene wat onder die wapens gevange geneem is, is as krygsgevangenes na Ceylon en Indië gestuur terwyl dié wat hul oorgegee het, in koloniale tronke aangehou is totdat hulle onder borg vrygestel is of passe gegee is. Slegs 'n paar honderd het voortgegaan om vir die res van 1901 in die Boererepublieke oorlog te voer.

Die tweede inval van Vrystaatse magte in die Kaapkolonie het bestaan uit mobiele kommando's wat kruis en dwars in die binneland rondbeweeg het. Die eerste paar maande het hulle verwoesting aangerig, maar na Junie 1901 het die militêre massataktieke gebruik teen diegene wat in die geïsoleerde noordwes-Kaap vasgekeer was. In 1902 het die Boererepublieke sonder die wete van die rebelle die Verdrag van Vereeniging onderteken en nie langer as soewereine state bestaan nie. Die Kaapse rebelle

was nie ondertekenaars van die verdrag nie. Volgens 'n ooreenkoms tussen die Boereleiers en die Koloniale Kantoor sou 'n rebel gedeeltelike amnestie ontvang en ontburger word indien hy hom oorgee en skuldig pleit aan Hoogverraad kragtens Proklamasie 100 van 1902. Rebelle-offisiere is egter in die hof aangekla en boetes en tronkstraf sou opgelê word.

Na die eerste inval is rebelle wat gevange geneem is of hulle oorgegee het, verhoor ingevolge die "Indemnity and Special Tribunals Act" wat van krag was vir ses maande tot April 1901. Krygswet was toe weer in swang vanaf 22 April tot Vrede teen die einde van Mei 1902, en ingevolge hierdie wet is 44 Kaapse koloniste, Republikeine en uitlanders tereggestel en honderde ander, wie se doodsvonnise na lewenslange dwangarbeid verander is, na krygsgevangenekampe op Bermuda en St. Helena verskeep. Die oorgawe van 3,442 rebelle is kragtens Proklamasie 100 van 1902 aanvaar. Rebelle-offisiere of diegene wat op ernstige aanklagte tereggestaan het, is ingevolge die "Indemnity and Special Tribunals Act" in Spesiale Hoogverraadhowe verhoor. Die algemene amnestie wat in 1905 aangekondig is, het 'n einde gebring aan die vervolgings van Kaapse rebelle weens Hoogverraad. In 1906 is die name van ontburgerde koloniste op die Kieserslys teruggeplaas.

Die finale amptelike terugkeersyfer van Kaapse rebelle vir 1903 is 12,205 of 0.5% van die totale bevolking, terwyl die terugkeersyfer volgens die navorser se databasis 16,198 rebelle of 0.7% is. In strategiese sin het die rebellie 'n beperkte rol gespeel in die algehele Republikeinse oorlogspoging ondanks die individuele rebel se selfopoffering vir die saak. Hoewel klein getalle betrokke was, het die rebellie egter 'n enorme impak op die koloniale lewe gehad (veral in 1901) aangesien dit aanleiding gegee het tot 'n skaars verbloemde burgeroorlog en vyandskap tussen die Afrikaner- en Engelse koloniste wat jare lank voortgeduur het.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my husband, David, my true friend and life's companion. I am the most privileged of people to have written a thesis in an atmosphere of genuine encouragement and steadfast support. For this, my love, I am deeply grateful.

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I am very privileged to still be able to say thank you to my mother, Marjorie Lloyd, not only for her encouragement, but to be able to discuss with her my studies and to be able to benefit from her ability to see beyond the facts.

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I would like to thank my knowledge partners, the Senate of the University of Stellenbosch, who did not see an age barrier as a criterium, and the staff of the Libraries for their unfailing help. A special thanks to my Promotor, Professor Albert Grundlingh. His terse, insightful comments helped me to see another view of the situation. My studies have been very stimulating, and for this I thank him.

South Africa is very privileged to have the quality of archives we have. The Cape Town Archives Repository is staffed by such helpful and skilled people. For the past twenty-five years the Staff of the National Library have always given me quality assistance. I also wish to thank the staff of the Africana Libraries in Port Elizabeth and Kimberley, Cory Library, the War Museum and the Free State Archives Repository. The smaller libraries and museums all over the country are treasure chests of information and culture. I am mindful of the help I have received at museums and libraries at Graaff-Reinet, Cradock, Middelburg, Colesberg, Prince Albert, Beaufort West, Knysna, George, Mossel Bay, Caledon, Darling and Oudtshoorn.

This thesis would never have been completed if it was not for the help and encouragement of Peter Greeff, Carl Steyn, Prof Johan Olivier, Danie Hoffman, Woody Nel, Sandy Stretton, Baas and Eddie Bezuidenhout and Annetjie Joubert. They represent only a few of the many people who have told me stories about the Cape rebels. To all of them, thank you.

ABBREVIATIONS

Asst	Assistant
Capt	Captain
CDF	Colonial Defence Force
Cmdt	Commandant
CMR	Colonial Mounted Rifles
Col	Colonel
Cpl	Corporal
DEOVR	Duke of Edinburgh's Own Volunteer Rifles
DMT	District Mounted Troop
Dr	Doctor
Gen	General
GOC	General Officer Commanding
JP	Justice of the Peace
Lieut	Lieutenant
Lieut-Col	Lieutenant-Colonel
Lieut-Gen	Lieutenant-General
Maj	Major
Maj-Gen	Major-General
MLA	Member of the Legislative Assembly
MMR	Midland Mounted Rifles
MPC	Member of the Provincial Council
OC	Officer Commanding
OFS	Orange Free State
Pdr	pounder
Pte	Private
POW	Prisoner-of-War
Rev	This abbreviation for Reverend has been used in preference to Ds (Dominee).
SA	South African
Tpr	Trooper
V/C	Veld Cornet (of the Boer forces)

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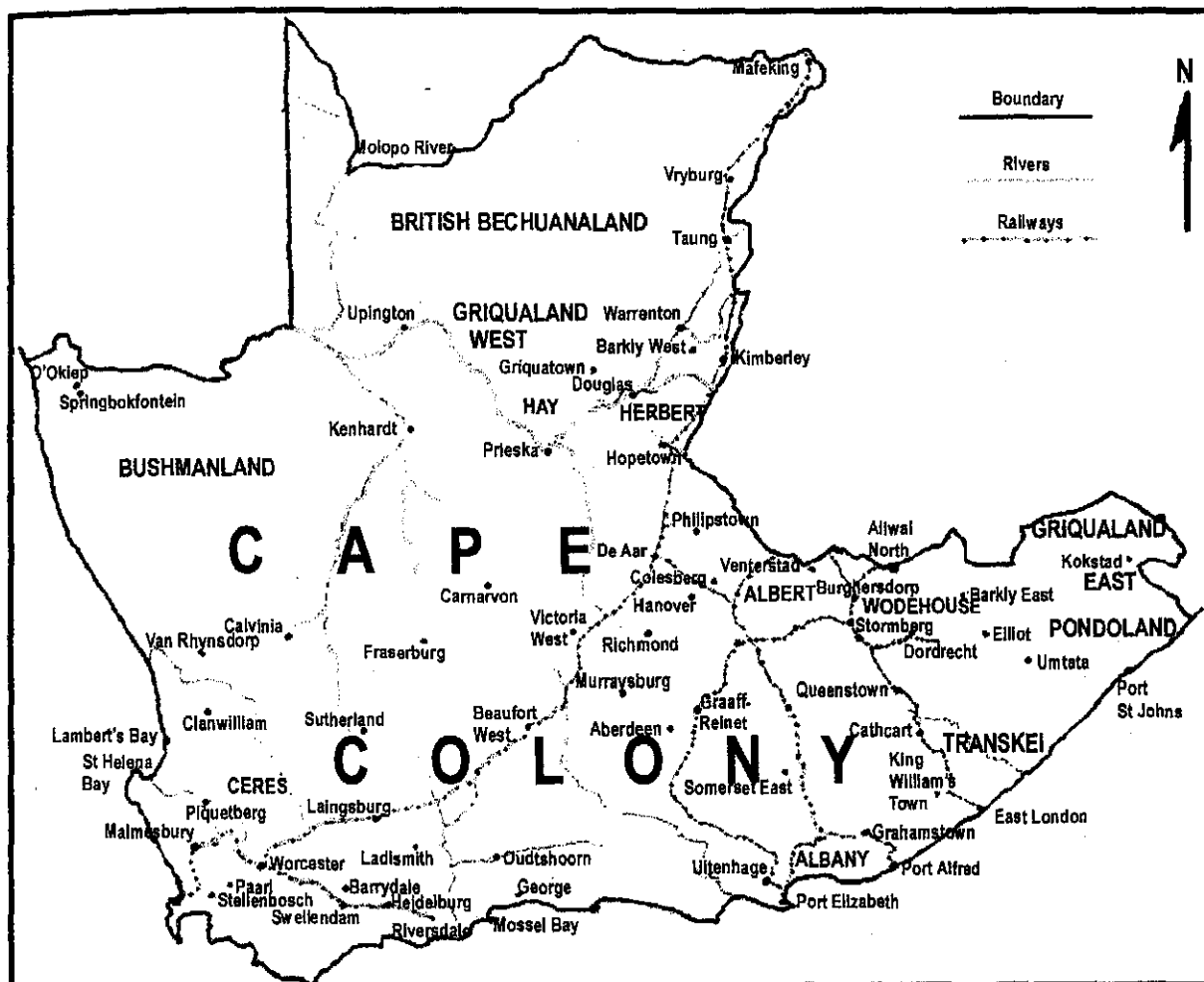
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MAP OF THE CAPE COLONY, 1899-1902

Scale : 1 inch : 120 miles / 25 mm : 190 km



INTRODUCTION

The centenary of the South African War has presented an opportunity to re-examine the many different views of the hostilities of 1899 to 1902 between the Transvaal and Orange Free State and Great Britain. Among the contentious aspects of the war is the rebellion by British citizens of the Cape Colony who took up arms on the side of the Boer Republics. What led them to rebel against a colonial government to whom they had previously showed no animosity?

The actions of the colonists in Griqualand West and Bechuanaland, the first group to rebel, should be viewed objectively in terms of the humanitarian and ecological disaster they suffered in the aftermath of the rinderpest pandemic, which resulted in a collapse of the rural economy just prior to the war. In T Gutsche's *There was a Man. The Life and Times of Sir Arnold Theiler KCMG of Onderstepoort*, Theiler was among the first to discuss the implication of the domino effect of the rinderpest catastrophe. CF Gronum's *Transportry Runderpes en Poskoetse* gives chilling eyewitness accounts of the pandemic's catastrophes. Another articles by A Theiler, 'De Runderpest', R Mack, 'The Great African Cattle Plague Epidemic of the 1890s', PB Rossiter, 'Rinderpest' and C van Onselen, 'Reactions to Rinderpest in Southern Africa' make compelling reading.¹

The initial study of the pandemic has helped flesh out the origins of the Cape Rebel during the South African War; establish his roots, his socio-economic standing and his family ties. It is through his family bonds that attempts will be made to delineate the implications for the Cape Afrikaner of the ambiguity implicit in being a Cape Afrikaner as well as a British citizen in a British Colony.

The centenary of the conflict and ten years of democracy has opened long-closed windows to the past so that, through this study, the sufferings of all people, not only the Cape rebel but also others, especially the black people and coloured people, can be fully acknowledged. Part of the process is to see the other side of the fighting men, Boer and British, not just as heroes, but also as enemies and adversaries who were rightly feared. While the British and Colonial Forces have long been castigated for their scorched-earth policy in the Orange Free State, there is time now and place to accept that the Republican forces descended on their neighbouring Afrikaner Cape colonists over the border in November 1899, and coerced those who did not want to join their forces into submission.

¹ Thelma Gutsche, *There was a Man. The Life and Times of Sir Arnold Theiler KCMG of Onderstepoort*; CF Gronum, *Transportry Runderpest en Poskoetse*; A Theiler, 'De Runderpest', in BP8 of Archives Library, R Mack, 'The Great African Cattle Plague Epidemic of the 1890s' in *Tropical Animal Health and Production*, II; PB Rossiter, 'Rinderpest', in Coetzer et al (eds), *Infectious Diseases of Livestock*, 11; C Van Onselen, 'Reactions to Rinderpest in Southern Africa' in *The Journal of African History*, XIII.3.

This dissertation is based on a database on each rebel, which started as cards in a shoebox. From this information fed into the database, referred to as 'The Rebel Record', a profile of the colonial rebel has emerged. The original intention of this researcher was to make this database available as an addendum to this thesis; however due to its size, 756 pages of information on 16,198 rebels, it was judged too extensive to be presented as such. Only the statistics from the database, numbers of Cape rebels per district, are included with the relevant census figures of 1891 and 1904; in this way the percentage of rebel support for the Boer forces can be compared on a regional basis. These statistics, like icebergs, serve as pointers to the bulk of the work that is out of sight. They indicate that the Cape rebel of the South African War, for all his bravery and endurance, played a minor role that, in later years, would assume larger proportions.

There is no remembered reason why this researcher, a South African with a British background, became interested and felt empathy for the Cape rebels and the extraordinary fates that life threw at them in the South African War. Except perhaps that a childhood in a Somerset East of the 1940s was a curious place full of no-go areas for English-speaking children, starting with the *Voortrekker* hall around the corner where 'the others' played *volkspele*, and those who went to Brownies did not.

This researcher came from a world of Soldiers of the Queen, but also lived in a society where these same soldiers were blamed for Annie in the concentration camp, the poor little waif behind the wire. After living in a South Africa with many contending views of the past, it is warming to find that it is possible now to break away from a statutory views of history and embrace a less partisan view of the South African War.²

For over thirty years we farmed on Layton in the Beaufort West district, and while my husband, David Shearing, studied the local flora (which culminated in *Karoo, Wild Flower Guide 6*, illustrated by artist Katryn van Heerden) there was time to study other facets of the environment. A Karoo and Roggeveld past redolent with fossils, rock gongs and battles between the San and Khoi and the early *trekboers*, merged into to the transhumance of the Roggeveld into the Tanqua Karoo each autumn. An abiding memory of a detailed study of the Karoo and Roggeveld loan farmers of the Dutch East India Company period is how few they were. It is thanks to the help of the late Dr JH Heese, author of *Slagtersnek en sy Mense*, that it all made sense.³

² G Cuthbertson, A Grundlingh, and M Suttie (eds), *Writing a Wider War*, p ix. This anthology on the South African War, 1899-1902 de-emphasizes political economy and explores new research into gender, health, nationalism, identities, ethics and morality.

³ JH Heese, *Slagtersnek en sy Mense*.

It was the discovery of a forgotten British war memorial on De Pannen on the Nuweveld in the Beaufort West district dating back to February 1902 that became the spur to an investigation of the South African War in the Cape Colony, and why the Boer commandos briefly held sway over the Karoo. One small mystery was never unravelled. Boy de Bruin, a 16-year old from Abrahamskraal, Victoria West, left home to join the Boers on the spur of the moment, riding a horse he had stolen from a neighbour. All he took with him was a spare pair of socks and half a bottle of *Rooi Lavental* (a Dutch remedy). He was never heard of again. His brother Hugo, said in 1961, that the family had long given up hope of his return, and thought he had drowned crossing the flooded Orange River.

This researcher chose the topic of the Cape rebel of the South African War for this dissertation because it was a continuation of Cape colonial, Karoo and Ghoup history. The official history of the Cape rebels might lie in the archives, but the folk history lived on through Eddie Bezuidenhout, our neighbour next door, at the meetings of the Agricultural Association, at Onse Rust, Fraserburg and stories told by farmers to this researcher at the Show grounds during annual agricultural shows.

The story of the first rebellion that lasted a brief five months has still to be fully told. A rich and apparently as yet untapped source of material on this invasion is to be found in the Cape Archives in the Attorney General 3387 to 3421 files, which contain statements made by Class 1 rebels during preliminary investigations into charges of High Treason. This type of material has its limitations as the people concerned were defendants under examination, but by using this source at least a picture is built up of the duties of those Cape colonists who led the rebellion.⁴

Secondary material on the Cape rebel, especially during the 1930s, portrayed the rebel as a hero or a martyr, and can be associated with the development of Afrikaans and its need for suitable literature during the era of growing Afrikaner nationalism. Issues germane to the theme will be addressed within the general context of interplay between pre-existing social configurations, state power and the exigencies of war.

What conditions are considered necessary for the successful pursuit of a people's war? Carl von Clausewitz, director of the Prussian War School, who wrote the seminal study on the theory of modern warfare, *On War*, in 1833, is remembered for his formula: 'war is the continuation of policy by other means'. Discussing a successful people's war, he pointed out that it must have popular support and be carried out in the interior of a country, and to a great extent over broken, inaccessible terrain.⁵

Despite their often-violent records, the rebels have a place as the great folk heroes of the western world. Why then do many literary figures, like Robin Hood and William Tell, vanish like a

⁴ CAR, AG 3387-3421, Preliminary Investigations into Class 1 rebels of Aliwal North, Barkly East, Barkly West, Cradock, Gordonia, Herbert, Hay, Kenhardt, Kuruman, Mafeking, Vryburg and Wodehouse.

mirage on closer examination? Whether in a real sense or only in dreams, common people have kept alive through the centuries the stories of the powerful hero, the outstanding leader and the tragic martyr. He came from the powerless masses and either led a rebellion against one or other tyrant, or laid down his life for his fellows. The legendary hero (like Cmdt Gideon Jacobus Scheepers) never really dies, because there is something meaningful in the story that appeals anew to each generation.⁶

The historiography of the South African War has concentrated mainly on the Boer Republics or Britain, and understandably less on the Cape Colony. The exceptions are *Die Afrikaner in Kaapland*, which discusses the invidious position of the Cape Afrikaner when the border districts were not protected against invasion, and they were commandeered under duress and on a pretext.⁷ *Rebelle-verhoor in Kaapland gedurende die Tweede Vryheidsoorlog met speciale verwysing na die Militêre Howe, 1899-1902*, refers to Martial Law, Class 1 and Class 2 rebels, and the dispute in the Cape Cabinet over the Amnesty question and Special and Military Courts.⁸ In general literature such as *The Boer War* by Thomas Packenham, the Dutch Cape colonists are featured initially as a group teetering on the brink of a mass uprising. However when the invasion of Griqualand West and the northern districts did take place, there is a dearth of motivation in the existing historiography on the short-lived rebellion, except for family ties. In keeping with all other general literature, the executions of rebels under Martial Law, such as that of Cmdt Lötter, are dealt with in detail.⁹

The military aspects of the war are detailed in the *Times History*, the official *History of the War in South Africa* and *Die Geskiedenis van die Tweede Vryheidsoorlog*. In them the rebel is cast as an unquestioning recruit of the Boer forces, and during 1901 as a local insurgent under a Free State commandant in the guerilla commandos.¹⁰ *Kaapland en die Tweede Vryheidsoorlog* deals with the political aspect of the war in the Cape Colony.¹¹

The suffering of the coloured people has been highlighted in Bill Nasson's *Abraham Esau's War*.¹² Many of them lie in unmarked graves in the Karoo and northwest Cape. However they are also remembered as brave and doughty fighters in HN and DA Kotzé's *Oorlog sonder Oorwinning*.¹³ As Town Guards they played a large part in the defence of various small villages; see 'The attack on

⁶ John Keegan, *A History of Warfare*, p3; Weiss, *Guerrilla Warfare*, On-line Encyclopaedia, <http://encarta.msn.com/find/Concise.asp?z=1&pg=2&ti=761560222&hs=insurgency>.

⁷ Harvey, *The Oxford Companion to English Literature*, p700 (Robin Hood), p806 (William Tell).

⁸ Snyman, JH, *Die Afrikaner in Kaapland 1899-1902*, Archives Yearbook 1962, pp68-70.

⁹ Snyman, JH, *Rebelle-verhoor in Kaapland gedurende die Tweede Vryheidsoorlog*, Archives Year Book 1962, pp21, 46-65.

¹⁰ Packenham, Thomas, *The Boer War*, Paperback edition, pp58, 527-28; executions, p561.

¹¹ LS Amery (ed), *The Times History of the War in South Africa 1899-1902*, I to VII; Captain Maurice Harold Grant, *History of the War in South Africa, 1899-1902*; JH Breytenbach, *Die Geskiedenis van die Tweede Vryheidsoorlog in Suid Afrika, 1899-1902*, I to VI.

¹² CJ Scheepers Strydom, *Kaapland en die Tweede Vryheidsoorlog*.

¹³ Bill Nasson, *Abraham Esau's War. A Black South African War in the Cape*, pp120-141.

¹⁴ HN Kotzé and DA Kotzé, *Oorlog sonder oorwinning: Die Anglo-Boereoorlog in die omgewing van Kakamas, Kenhardt, Keimoes en Upington*, p73-85

Willowmore' by Don Diespecker, in *Military History Journal* and in Shearing's article, 'Coloured Involvement in the Boer War' in *Quarterly Journal of the South African Library*¹⁴.

The emotional anti-war book, G Jordaan's *Hoe zij Stierven*, deals with the last hours of members of the Boer forces and colonial rebels prior to execution. It was translated into Afrikaans as *Sò het Hulle Gesterf*. A new title, by G Jooste and A Oosthuizen, *So het Hulle Gesterf*, which includes twenty other executions, which occurred in the Transvaal and Orange Free State under British administration, has recently been published. According to an Africana book dealer, Jordaan's titles, especially the Dutch title, seldom reach the second-hand market, because they are too worn from constant handling. Their enduring popularity reflects the powerful needs of ordinary people to have heroes and martyrs.¹⁵

M Tamarkin's *Cecil John Rhodes and the Cape Afrikaner* deals with Rhodes' interaction with the Cape Afrikaner and the growth of the Afrikaner Bond. While his thesis does not extend into the war years, it does give valuable background into the under-researched Cape Afrikaner. There is much documentation of political matters, but little sense of social geography and the divide between the rich and the poor. Neither is there discussion on the rinderpest pandemic or the economic chaos that followed.¹⁶

E van Heyningen's dissertation, *The Relations between Sir Alfred Milner and WP Schreiner's Ministry* deals with the activities of the Cape Government in the run-up to the South African War.¹⁷ The unpublished masters' dissertations of this researcher and that of Rodney Constantine both cover the Second Invasion of the Cape Colony. Constantine's thesis deals with the Cape Colony both north and south of the Orange River, while this researcher's deals with the war from both the point of view of the rebel and the colonial forces, but only south of the Orange River. TA Botha's dissertation, 'Graaff-Reinet tydens die Anglo-Boereoorlog, 1899-1902' covers a more restricted area, but one of importance because a Military Court was established there.¹⁸ Eben Nel's *Die Kaapse Rebelle van die*

¹⁴ Don Diespecker, 'The Attack on Willowmore, 1 June 1901', in *Military History Journal*, IX, No 4, 1993; Taffy Shearing, 'Coloured Involvement in the South African War in the Cape Colony', in *Quarterly Bulletin of the South African Library*, XL No 1, 1985.

¹⁵ G Jordaan, *Hoe zij stierven*; G Jordaan, *Sò het hulle Gesterf, Laaste ure van Diegene oor wie die Doodvonnis Uitgespreek en Voltrek is in die Kaapkolonie Gedurende die Oorlog van 1899-1902*; Graham Jooste and Abrie Oosthuizen, *So Het Hulle Gesterf: Gedenkboek van Teregstellings van Kaapse Rebelle en Republikeinse Burgers Tydens die Anglo-Boereoorlog 1899-1902*.

¹⁶ M Tamarkin, *Cecil John Rhodes and the Cape Afrikaner*, pp69,239.

¹⁷ Van Heyningen, E, *The Relations between Sir Alfred Milner and WP Schreiner's Ministry, 1899-1900*, Archives Year Book 1976.

¹⁸ Rodney James Constantine, 'The Guerrilla War in the Cape Colony during the South African War of 1899-1902: A case study of the Republican and Rebel Commando Movement', unpublished dissertation for the degree of Master of Arts, University of Cape Town, 1996; HA Shearing, 'Second Invasion of the Cape Colony during the Second Anglo-Boer War, 1901-02', unpublished dissertation for the degree of Master of Arts, Natal University, 1989; TA Botha, 'Graaff-Reinet tydens die Anglo-Boereoorlog, 1899-1902', unpublished dissertation for the degree of Master of Arts, University of Port Elizabeth, 1991.

Hantam-Karoo, 1899-1902 is a repository of archival sources on this period, especially on the tragic case of Abraham Esau of Calvinia.¹⁹

Sources for this thesis include memoirs and diaries. De Villiers' *Met Steyn en de Wet in het Veld*, which appeared in 1903 and has certain immediacy. *Die Oorlogsherinneringe van Kommandant Jacob Petrus Naser* is the only memoir of a Cape rebel that covers the war from 1899-1902. Bosman's *Slaan en Vlug* gives a rare glimpse into the rebellion in the Albert district. Latter sections of the memoir are confused, probably due to the malaria he was suffering' which was discovered when he was left behind by Gen JC Smuts in the Cradock district.²⁰ Other published rebels' memoirs that deal with the second rebellion in the Cape Colony include Smith's *Ek Rebeleer* and Du Plessis' *Oomblikke van Spanning*, which appeared in the 1940's and are uncritical adventure stories.²¹ Daniel Scheepers of Upsal, Somerset East handed his Memoirs to the Editor of the Somerset Budget in the 1930s, to be published after his death. They revealed the tensions between the Free Staters and the rebels, and highlighted the strengths and weaknesses of the commandos in 1901.²²

Further publications that explore the Cape rebel in a changing situation include FR Davel's *Herinneringe van Francois Retief Davel*, and AV Oosthuizen's *Rebelle van die Stormberge*. The members of Lötter's and Scheepers' Commandos are listed in *Commandant Johannes Lötter and his Rebels* and *Commandant Gideon Scheepers and the Search for his Grave* by this researcher and her husband. New material about the suffering of rebels convicted by Military Courts came to light in the unpublished story of Willem Steyn, 'Kaapse Rebel te Bermuda'. Willem Steyn dictated the original memoir in 1929, which his son, Charl Steyn, reworked. The original material is identified by the phrase, "Pappa het gesê".²³

Most of the Boer commandants and generals who invaded the Cape Colony feature in one book or another, including *Die Oorlogsavonture van Genl Wynand Malan* by Pieterse, De Kersaun de Pennedreff, *Ek en die Vierkleur* and *Scheepers se Dagboek* by Preller. All of them contain general material on Cape rebels of the 2nd Invasion.²⁴ It would be impossible to contemplate a study of this

¹⁹ Eben Nel, *Die Kaapse Rebelle van die Hantam-Karoo, Anglo-Boereoorlog 1899-1902*, pre-publication digital copy.

²⁰ OT de Villiers, *Met De Wet en Steyn in Het Veld*; André Wessels (ed), *Die Oorlogsherinneringe van Kommandant Jacob Petrus Naser*, Christiaan de Wet-Annale, VII; JP Bosman, *Slaan en Vlug*, pp4, 58-59.

²¹ JA Smith, *Ek Rebeleer*, joined the Boer forces in July 1901, PH du Plessis, *Oomblikke van Spanning*, joined the Boer forces in January 1901.

²² Cmdt D du P Scheepers' Memoirs were published in instalments in the Somerset Budget, Somerset East from 23 May to 23 June 1962.

²³ W Steyn, 'Kaapse Rebel te Bermuda', unpublished memoir, private archives of C Steyn, Glentana.

²⁴ HJC Pieterse, *Die Oorlogsavonture van Genl Wynand Malan*, led a small commando of Free Staters and rebels in the Midlands and later, as a combat general appointed by Smuts, returned to the Midlands in March 1902. R de Kersaun de Pennedreff, *Ek en die Vierkleur*. Robert the Frenchman was a boon companion to Manie Maritz and his account deals with guerilla warfare in the Midlands and in the northwest Cape; Dr Gustav S Preller, *Scheepers se Dagboek en die Stryd in Kaapland, (1 Okt 1901 – 18 Jan 1902)*. Numerous Rebels were mentioned by Scheepers and Preller in this study.

kind without Official Sources such as the Prisoner-of-War lists, surrender documents and absconded rebel lists.

The question remains: how then does this work differ from what went before it, and what is there that is significant in the light of current scholarship? The contemporary tendency is to examine a group in some depth, as most subjects can supply fresh insights when they are viewed from diverse angles. In this case a fresh picture emerges when the rebels are viewed as Cape colonists first, then as Cape rebels and finally as colonial volunteers in the Boer forces.

Other researchers can claim that they have followed a similar approach, but this dissertation seeks to unpack the dynamics of the rebellion in depth and aims to demonstrate the counter forces that impinged on the rebels. This study has not been approached in a genre of a family or group saga.

Essentially the cyclical responses of the Imperial and Colonial forces to the insurgents were largely conditional on the current military situation between the SA Field Force and the Transvaal and Orange Free State forces. It was the lack of political will by the Cape Colonial Government that gave the Free State forces the initial opportunity to raise insurgents in the Cape Colony to bolster the Boer forces. As the civil service and the Cape Police withdrew from the border villages, under orders from the Government, the rebels, recruited and armed by the Orange Free State forces, left their farms and began the cycle by moving into armed laagers on the outskirts of villages. Through the commandeering of shops, livestock and wagons from Afrikaner colonists, supplies were built up. Many English-speaking farmers were forced to vacate their properties and their livestock and a variety of goods from these farms were also brought into the laagers.

The rebel insurgents, mainly led by the Free Staters, underwent a process of adaptation once the Colonial Volunteers, plus British forces, established rival armed camps, resulting in skirmishes between the two groups. The government forces, with better artillery and more experienced gunners, succeeded in driving the rebel forces out of the villages. However the collapse of the first invasion in March 1900 was not caused by a military victory over the insurgents in the Cape Colony, but by the defeat of Transvaal and Free State forces at Paardeberg, which led to a domino effect resulting in the surrender of the majority of the insurgents.

A de-escalation of the conflict occurred in the Cape Colony during the remainder of 1900. The following cycle in the insurgency movement occurred when the invasion of fast-moving commandos from the Free State into the Cape Colony evoked an all-out response from the military and Colonial Government. In this phase the civilian population became involved in the battlefield as Town Guards and District Mounted Troops. Using a process defined as 'invasive harassment', the insurgents kept on the move, foraging as they rode. These widespread raids resulted in an increasingly stringent response from the counter-insurgents. The profound psychological consequences of the reprisals, such as executions of captured insurgents by government forces, resulted in long-standing hostility between the Afrikaner and English pro-government forces. However the Free Staters

weakened their forces by splitting them up, leading to their defeat in the Boer Republics by the SA Field Force who had forced the insurgents in the Cape Colony into a region that was not strategically important.

The questions this researcher has asked and tried supply some answers is what lasting impact the rinderpest pandemic had on the colonists of Griqualand West and Bechuanaland, and why a prosperous colony under Responsible Government failed to defend itself from invasion by Republican forces. The colonial government had at their disposal the Cape Mounted Riflemen to take the lead, and supported by trained Volunteers with an excellent chain of command, should have been quite capable of making a strong defensive showing along the frontiers with the Transvaal and the Orange Free State.²⁵ The thesis documents evidence of the lack of political will on the part of the Prime Minister, WP Schreiner, and that his policy of neutrality was pursued to the advantage of the Boer Republics at the cost of the Cape Afrikaner living in the border regions.²⁶ The first rebellion, following the invasion of the Cape Colony by Republican forces, was partly a protest at the breakdown in colonial Government. Contemporary reports in the press and statements by Class 1 rebels support this point of view.

Previous researchers have found the development of political, ethnic self-consciousness to be the dominant reason for the Cape Afrikaner's support of the Boer Republics. However when types of internal war are analysed, the first rebellion also has elements of a civil insurgency; discontent with the policies of the regime, inadequate communication between the regime and the masses, existence of groups ready to capitalize on anti-regime sentiments and channel discontent into action, and the emergence of an attractive ideology incompatible with the existing social and political system.²⁷

The two worlds, that of the Boer Republics of the Transvaal and Orange Free State, and the colonial world, flowed and breathed together. The greatest numbers of rebels would come from the districts that share a common boundary with the Transvaal and the Orange Free State. The family trees of the majority of Dutch republicans were rooted in the Old Colony near the graves of their ancestors. Cape Afrikaner and Boer shared the same strong family bonds, attended the same churches and had largely the same surnames. They read and wrote Dutch, talked Afrikaans widely, admired President Steyn and some referred to themselves as '*Steyn manne*'. It is not surprising that a certain number of colonists on the border made common cause with the Free State when there was a breakdown in orderly colonial government.

²⁵ CAR, CCP 10/15, Cape of Good Hope, *Statistical Register*, 1900, No 3: Cape Mounted Riflemen; No 4: Volunteers; No 5: Number of Officers and Men belonging to Volunteer and Cadet Corps and Mounted Rifle clubs, plus number of arms etc, pp23-24.

²⁶ Eric Walker, *WP Schreiner, A South African*, pp199-203; GHL le May, *British Supremacy in South Africa, 1899-1907*, pp40-41.

²⁷ Andrew M Scott, et al, *Insurgency*, p17.

This thesis is also mindful of the tendency of informants to exaggerate the support that rebellion enjoyed in the Cape Colony; and that the many who remained neutral or who did not support the war have been forgotten. Much of the information has been culled from official documents when it has not been possible to find any other sources. Unless a document or diary remains in family hands, the context in which the event took place becomes woven into legend and folklore by the second generation, and oral accounts also tend to reflect current trends and feelings.

The most formidable problem militarily was the slowness of the Government forces in dealing with the challenge and adjusting to it. In 1901 it took Kitchener some time to realise that insurgency had become a real problem, and could not just be dealt with by defensive methods such as driving horses into camps. He had to suppress rebellion or it would delay the end of the war. The lenient treatment of Class 2 rebels was clearly a factor in the recruitment of young rebels during 1901. A lack of coordination on the side of the Free Staters and the rebel commandants was strategically detrimental to Boer forces. Once the commandos were reduced in number, the tactic of Government forces was to seal off the area and hunt the commandos down.

The war ended with a few thousand rebels laying down arms in areas of little strategic value. Because the Free State forces were unable to give material support to the rebels of the Cape Colony, the number of rebels dwindled, but they fought on and laid down their lives in a wasted effort to fulfil President Steyn's dream of victory and independence for the Orange Free State, long after the war there and in the Transvaal was irretrievably lost.

When the two rebellions in the Cape Colony are examined in terms of insurgency strategies, there was never any doubt that the Government of the Cape Colony would retain its political power. The establishment of a base area for the rebels, the most vital objective of guerilla forces, was never a factor except in a few isolated areas along the Orange River. Because the rebel forces had to fight each day, escape their pursuers, and also find food and fodder as well as ammunition, they were eventually worn down. The rebels were impoverished by their support of the Boer Republics, and many, in the aftermath of the war, remained bitter and complained that their former allies had abandoned them.

CHAPTER 1

CALLING THE BROTHERHOOD TO ARMS

The South African War, 1899–1902 has enjoyed much academic discussion, however the arguments generally concentrate on the perspectives of the main belligerents, the Boer Republics and Great Britain. Rarely do you find studies examining the conflict from the perspectives of the colonists of the Cape of Good Hope and Natal.¹ In this dissertation though, the protagonists are the British citizens of the Cape Colony who sided with the Boer Republics - minor players in the historiography of the South African War.² These rebels rose in support of the republican forces invading the Cape Colony and waged war, not only against the British, but were involved in civil conflicts with the colonial loyalists, Dutch- and English-speaking.

As the complexity of interaction between man and his surroundings becomes increasingly evident, this study will also focus on the enormous change in the environment of Southern Africa due to the Rinderpest pandemic and the impact the catastrophe had on the events that followed.³ Recently the rebel has lost further ground as the research into the black South Africans' role in the conflict receives long overdue attention following the multiparty elections of 1994.⁴

Opinions were divided over the disaffected Cape colonists or rebels. To the burghers of the South African Republic and Orange Free State, he was at best a brother,⁵ a valuable ally, sometimes an unsteady fighter, and later a martyr to the Boer cause.⁶ To the British and the colonial loyalists, he was a traitor who had risen in rebellion against his sovereigns, Queen Victoria and King Edward VII.⁷ Previous studies

¹ M Coghlan, 'Brother vs Brother', *New Contree*, No 46 (November 1999).

² Standard source books on this era are Snyman, *Rebelle-verhoor in Kaapland* and *Die Afrikaner in Kaapland*; Scheepers Strydom, *Kaapland en die Tweede Vryheidsoorlog*.

³ Gutsche, *There Was a Man*, pp35-104; PB Rossiter, 'Rinderpest', pp738-757; Mack, 'The Great African Cattle Plague Epidemic', pp210-217.

⁴ Peter Warwick, *Black People and the South African War, 1899-1902*; Bill Nasson, *Abraham Esau's War*; JL Comaroff (ed), *The Boer War Diary of Sol T Plaatje, An African at Mafeking*; T Shearing, 'Coloured Involvement in the South African War', pp7-11.

⁵ Breytenbach, *Die Geskiedenis van die Tweede Vryheidsoorlog in Suid Afrika*, II, p91, Letter from Steyn pleading to the burghers to stand firm.

⁶ Jordaan (ed), *Sò Het Hulle Gesterf*. Gives details of the executions of 34 Cape rebels.

⁷ British Intelligence, *Military Notes on the Dutch Republics of South Africa*, Compiled in Section B, Intelligence Division, War Office, revised June 1899, Secret, p46; T Barclay, 'Laws of War', *Encyclopedia Britannica*, Tenth Edition, XXXIII, p751.

argue that these Cape colonists rose in rebellion because of family ties with republicans.⁸ While this point is valid, this inquiry will scrutinize additional reasons for the rebellion in the Cape Colony during the South African War.

Relationships between English and Dutch in mid Victorian times

Forty years earlier the relationships between the English- and Dutch-speaking colonists were generally frank and warm. By the mid 19th Century three quarters of the white rural population consisted of Dutch farmers while the English-speaking colonists, clustered in the small towns and villages, were generally, shopkeepers, civil servants and artisans. The colonists were peaceful and loyal subjects, and many Dutch prospered under colonial rule and came from traditional white communities who were proud of being British citizens. According to Tamarkin, "they exploited the economic spaces that opened up with the expansion of the capitalist economy. They valued the stability and security provided by the colonial State. They were prominent on municipal boards and in divisional councils. They controlled most Afrikaner Bond branches and ultimately their representatives became the arbiters of power in Parliament".⁹

Although there were inherent tensions between the English and Afrikaner, in the 19th Century the tyranny of distance helped bind many inhabitants of isolated villages together. It was common custom for the *Kerkraad* to give permission for the English people to hold services in Dutch Reformed Churches.¹⁰ The early Afrikaans letters of Samuel Zwartman about life in Fraserburg, founded in 1851, revealed just how closely knit the English and the Afrikaner could become. So united was this community that members of the Dutch Reformed Church were outraged when their Rev CA Bamberger did not pay the customary courtesy call on Bishop Robert Gray when he visited Fraserburg in 1872 to consecrate St Augustines, the newly erected Anglican Church.¹¹

The gossip letters about goings-on in Fraserburg, which appeared unexpectedly in the *Het Volksblad* in early Afrikaans in the 1870s, created a sensation, and as the suspected author, H Cooper, took care to poke fun at himself, his identity remained hidden.¹² While some people wrote to the paper complaining that the letters created ill feeling, nobody said they should have been written in Dutch or

⁸ Scheepers Strydom, *Kaapland en die Tweede Vryheidsoorlog*, p65 states that 'through ties of blood relationships they [the Colonists] resolved to defend the fighting burghers against a mighty enemy'. (Loose translation).

⁹ Tamarkin, *Cecil John Rhodes and the Cape Afrikaner*, p69.

¹⁰ GR Nesemann, *Our Heritage of Early Stone Churches. Built by Scottish Stone-Masons Bern and Lawrence*, p24.

¹¹ DA Scholtz, *Fraserburg en sy Kerk 1851-1976*, p36.

¹² GS Nienaber, *Die Afrikaanse Geskrifte van Samuel Zwartman*. A series of humorous letters written in secret, apparently by law agent HWA Cooper, in a form of early Afrikaans, appeared in the *Het Volksblad* between 1870 and 1873.

English, instead they were enjoyed for their lively style and sly humour; and even today they have not lost their charm.

Still, in the 1870s, colonists who were truly bilingual were rare. Francois Retief Davel, a volunteer from Nieu Bethesda in the Sneeuberg Rangers in the 9th Frontier War of 1878, described the confusion on commando where “many recruits could not understand English, the Lieutenant could not speak Dutch and Afrikaans had not been born”.¹³ Despite the language difficulties the oldest binding factors that drew the different racial groups together in the Cape Colony remained those periodic hazards: commando duty and drought.

Because of its diversity, the economic and environmental factors in the Cape Colony should be inspected below the usual political level for the initial rebellion to make sense. Other social factors leading to the war, frequently overlooked, emerge. These include a crisis in the economy and intense competition for dwindling food resources in Griqualand West and Bechuanaland that accelerated the conflict and influenced its impact.

This discussion will first deal with the rise and dramatic fall of the transport industry, and then the diplomatic/political aspects such as the Jameson Raid in the run-up to the war.

Northward expansion and the growth of the transport industry

While the dramatic discovery of diamonds and gold led to industrialization of South Africa in the late 19th Century, the rural economy in Southern Africa was still dependant on the agricultural sector. From the Karoo to Bechuanaland it was the ownership of sheep, goats and cattle that underpinned the prosperity of the rural districts. An economy dependent on animals revolved around the landowner, the tenant farmer who worked for him and ran stock on the side, and the transport rider who carted merchandise and farm products to and from markets. Due to outbreaks of horse sickness, the transport industry relied heavily on the ox-wagon.

Kimberley rose overnight out of the veld following the discovery of diamonds, and by 1871 had a population of 50,000. The reality of the diamond rush, said De Kiewiet, was “if the diamonds were evenly distributed each digger would get only a pittance for reward”.¹⁴ Those who had no luck turned to supplying food and goods and, until the railways reached Kimberley in 1886, it became a farmers’ and

¹³ FR Davel, *Herinneringe van Francois Retief Davel 1856-1946: 'n Boer van Nieu-Bethesda Distrik, Graaff-Reinet*, Graaff-Reinet Museum Archives, p27.

¹⁴ CW de Kiewiet, *A History of South Africa, Social and Economic*, pp 89-90; Louis Cohen, *Reminiscences of Kimberley*, facsimile edition, p27.

transport riders' mecca.¹⁵ Griqualand West was incorporated into the Cape Colony in 1877. Sir John Molteno, the Cape Prime Minister, had reluctantly agreed with the British government to this measure. He was not alone; many Free Staters did not wish to be Cape colonists either.¹⁶

In 1880 Cecil Rhodes, the diamond magnate, had floated the De Beers mining company, which paid an astonishing dividend of 25% on a capital of two and a third million pounds in 1888. By 1899 Kimberley's population had reached 64,000 and was second only to Cape Town in size.¹⁷ About 23,000 whites lived in Barkly West, Herbert (Douglas and Campbell) and Hay (Griquatown and Postmasburg). They were mostly Afrikaans farmers or diamond diggers from a variety of backgrounds.¹⁸

The direct route to the diamond fields from the Cape was through Mossel Bay, but from all directions the roads converged on Kimberley, thronged with heavy wagons. The farmers sold cattle, sheep and goats, fruit and vegetables, butter and fat on the market. At that stage all tinned meats and condensed milk, as well as most of the wheat and oats, were imported. The transportation of wood at £40 a load for the mine was highly lucrative and Gronum said the best 18-foot Grahamstown wagon with eighteen red Afrikaner oxen could be paid off in just six months.¹⁹

In 1886 the railway line from Cape Town reached Kimberley, cutting off the long haul loads from the Cape for the wagoners. Transport drivers then found that merchants were paying £1-10-0 per 100lbs for loads transported from Kimberley to the newly discovered Witwatersrand gold fields. The route through Warrenton, Christiana and Bloemhof became heavily congested as *togryers* and their sons transported everything from mine to building equipment, food and eager fortune hunters to the goldfields.²⁰

In 1890 when Rhodes took office as Prime Minister of the Cape Colony he demanded that the Cape railway proceed northwards instead of in an easterly direction.²¹ Ten years before local forces had seized Tswana land proclaiming the Republics of Stellaland and Goshen, but Rhodes viewed the two new Boer republics as a hindrance to northward progress. The region was annexed by the Cape Colony in January 1885, though many Stellalanders petitioned against the absorption of the region into the Cape Colony.²² When the railway line reached Vryburg the following year, transport drivers relocated and

¹⁵ Eric A Walker, *A History of Southern Africa*, p34.

¹⁶ Walker, *A History of Southern Africa*, p367; Sarah Gertrude Millin, *Rhodes*, pp12-13; The Hon Alex Wilmot, *The Life and Times of Sir Richard Southey KCMG etc.*, pp188-235.

¹⁷ Millin, *Rhodes*, p 84; S Lunderstedt (ed), *The Summer of 1899*, p74. Quote from a Mayor's minute.

¹⁸ CAR, CCP 10/15, Cape of Good Hope, *Statistical Register, 1900*, pp25-26.

¹⁹ Gronum, *Transportry, Runderpes en Poskoetse*, pp10, 19.

²⁰ Gronum, *Transportry, Runderpes en Poskoetse*, pp48-49; Millin, *Rhodes*, p25, describes a journey by ox-wagon that emphasises just how tedious such a journey could be.

²¹ Millin, *Rhodes*, p354.

²² Walker, *A History of Southern Africa*, pp 369,403.

started moving goods by wagon to the Witwatersrand. There were eventually 30 registered carriers on the Vryburg Voters' roll, and probably many other non-voters. A boom era followed.²³

In 1892 the Transvaal and Cape railway lines met at Vereeniging and the dominance of ox-wagon transport as the major carrier to the goldfields ceased.²⁴ Transport riders, then began carting loads into the Chartered Company's territories of Matebele and Mashonaland, racing against the platelayers putting down the train tracks to Lobatsi. By the end of 1895 they were loading over 2,000 wagons at the bonded stores at Mafeking, bound for Bulawayo and beyond. The wagons could carry up to 10,000lbs in weight and the price rose to £1-12-6 per 100lbs. Goods were also being carted from the coast at Beira to Salisbury. Small wonder that farmers from the Cape and the Boer republics converged from all quarters to the lucrative routes, and families put their savings into wagons and oxen and fathers stood surety for their son's debts. Travelling with up to 30 wagons in extended units, the transport drivers dealt with rutted tracks, rivers in flood and attacks from lions, knowing that only by working together could they deliver their loads in good order and prosper; and many did.²⁵

This whole vibrant economy that had brought prosperity to Griqualand West and Bechuanaland, collapsed overnight in March and April 1896 as a result of the greatest pandemic to devastate Africa's animals: the great Rinderpest disaster.

Buchanan questions today why we are unable to understand why wars break out when they do. His argument is that nothing reaches a critical point by itself. Maladjustment, and the human distress that goes with it, has to reach a threshold of severity before the social fabric will give way.²⁶ Gutsche states, "The great rinderpest pandemic was to change all that; while its impact has been ignored in the historiography of the Anglo-Boer War. Like the Irish famine, the devastation of the rinderpest has not been fully assessed. As much as the Jameson Raid veiled the approaching pandemic, so the Boer War obscured the changes it wrought".²⁷

Rinderpest pandemic

Rinderpest is the common name for an acute to sub-acute, contagious viral disease of cattle and wildlife. In the Cape of Good Hope *Agricultural Journal* of May 1896 it was described as "the most

²³ Gronum, *Transportry, Runderpes en Poskoetse*, p83; CAR, AG 3500, List of Persons residing in the Electoral Division of Vryburg, whose names have been registered in 1899.

²⁴ Jose Buurman, *Early Railways at the Cape*, p140.

²⁵ Gronum, *Transportry, Runderpes en Poskoetse*, pp90-99.

²⁶ Mark Buchanan, *Ubiquity: the Science of History... Or Why the World is Simpler than we Think*, pp86, 168.

²⁷ Gutsche, *There was a Man*, pl04. Gives detailed observations on the spread of the rinderpest pandemic and highlights the economic and social implications.

virulent disease in the history of the world that appears principally in bovine species, in the form of a rapidly spreading epidemic, and destroys all the animals in the region it attacks".²⁸ The disease is akin to measles and canine distemper in dogs, and its mortality rate can exceed 90% at times. Endemic around the Caspian Sea, outbreaks of rinderpest have been traced to as early as 4 BC, to slaughter cattle driven behind armies on the march.²⁹ The British Army were said to have brought infected cattle to Khartoum in 1884, the Italian Army to Eritrea in 1887 and a German military expedition brought sick cattle into East Africa in 1889. The result was a catastrophic outbreak of rinderpest in the local cattle and vast herds of game. About 98% of the wildlife in East Africa was wiped out as Africa's cloven hoofed antelope species also had no immunity to the disease. The disease reached the Zambezi in 1892, and began moving westward into Angola.³⁰ By 1895 the rinderpest pandemic crossed the Zambezi River and lurched southwards, cutting a deadly swathe through Mashonaland and then Matabeleland.

In March 1896 Dr Arnold Theiler, a Transvaal veterinary surgeon, was ordered by President Paul Kruger to Bulawayo to investigate alarming reports of widespread cattle deaths around Bulawayo. There he met CE Gray, a trained veterinarian and together they confirmed that the disease was rinderpest.³¹ The epidemic soon spread south from Matabeleland via the transport oxen at a rate of twenty miles (32 kms) a week into Bechuanaland. In the wake of the pandemic were scenes of devastation; hundreds of fully loaded wagons were stranded, surrounded by thousands of stinking oxen lying dead, many still in their traces. The wagon trail and environs reeked with the stench of dead animals. Only 10% of the oxen survived. The shattered drivers, facing ruin as they had failed to deliver their loads, abandoned their wagons to the veld and the scavengers and struggled back to Griqualand West on foot, to find when they reached home that the disease had gone before them and the stock on their farms was dying as well. Overnight they were deprived not only of their income, transport and livelihood, but their meat, fat, butter and sour milk, and the game for the pot had vanished as well. The economy was paralyzed. Hundreds of colonists slid from being prosperous landowners to despised and landless poor whites overnight.

Mafeking and Vryburg were by far the hardest hit in the first wave of the epidemic as about 97% of Colonial Bechuanaland cattle died; only 2,450 head of large stock survived in Mafeking. The Cape Government promulgated the Rinderpest Act in July 1896, and introduced drastic quarantine and stamping out measures, which created further hardship although the mortality rate of the cattle did drop somewhat.³² In Barkly West 62%, or 26,374, cattle died, while Herbert and Hay districts lost 48%, or

²⁸ CAR, Cape of Good Hope, *Agricultural Journal*, 14 May 1896, Dr A Edington, 'Rinderpest', 18 April 1896.

²⁹ CAR, Theiler, *De Runderpest*. Theiler pointed out that rinderpest was first reported in 4 AD. It was formerly usually referred to as 'the dreaded murrain.'

³⁰ Rossiter, 'Rinderpest', in *Infectious Diseases of Livestock*, pp735-757.

³¹ Gutsche, *There was a Man*, p84.

³² CAR, Cape of Good Hope *Statutes and Indexes*, IV, 1896-1900, pp3611-3613.

some 14,000 cattle, and Prieska lost 46%, or 4,983 head of cattle to the pandemic.³³ Under the Animal Diseases Act all districts in Griqualand West and Bechuanaland were placed in quarantine from September or October 1896, a total of 70 districts or regions all over the Cape Colony were quarantined; and this was only lifted in either April or May of 1898.³⁴

In the Transvaal Kruger had issued a Proclamation on 11 March 1896 prohibiting the movement of cattle into the Transvaal, but transport drivers, trying to reach their homes, carried rinderpest into Zeerust.³⁵ Gutsche stated, "Draconian laws were inflicted, and the wholesale destruction of infected animals was ordered, with minimal compensation. Before the disease ran its course in Bechuanaland Protectorate, blacks postponed death from starvation by eating caterpillars, bark, roots and long-decayed corpses. The rinderpest raged uncontrollably, it was here that the Boer War was lost".³⁶ Two thirds of the cattle, or 1,002,297, and untold numbers of game, died in the Transvaal. Not an ox survived in the Zoutpansberg. In the Waterberg people of all races, who had endured drought and swarms of locust, starved or died of fever. The donkeys contracted foot rot and mules, anthrax. Horses succumbed to horse sickness. Across the Transvaal animal-drawn transport was paralyzed in 1896 for many months.³⁷ Transvaal Districts that suffered heavily included Lydenburg, Piet Retief, Rustenburg, Pretoria, and Wolmaransstad.³⁸ As the Transvaal Boers mainly grew tobacco and not vegetables the sudden loss of cattle, game and dairy products, including animal fat, was a disaster for the rural population. The quarantine and stamping out methods also caused a political revolt in Southern Rhodesia and further south in the Langeberg. Blacks and whites blamed each other for the spread of the disease.³⁹

Hastily erected fences stopped the movement of cattle and meat and protected the Orange Free State and Natal until the disease broke through in 1897 and caused further havoc. Nicolson, writing in 1898, advised British immigrants not to come to the Transvaal. "The year 1897 has been of frightful suffering to the poor Boers; thousands have lost everything from rinderpest, locust and drought. Hundreds of these people have died of sheer starvation; thousands succumbed to fever and other diseases due to a poor diet composed of wild roots. The quality of silent suffering is wonderfully developed in the Boer race".⁴⁰

³³ CAR, CCP 1/2/1/106, G72, Rinderpest statistics for Cape Colony, compiled May 1898.

³⁴ Cape of Good Hope *Government Gazette*, No 610 of 1898, 15 July 1898. Areas under Quarantine; Van Onselen, 'Reactions to Rinderpest in Southern Africa', pp473-488.

³⁵ CAR, Cape of Good Hope, *Journal of Agriculture*, issues from April to December 1896 published articles on many aspects of the pandemic.

³⁶ Gutsche, *There Was a Man*, pp85, 87, 92.

³⁷ Walker, *A History of Southern Africa*, p462. Quoted from British Parliamentary Papers, C9093.

³⁸ British Intelligence, *Military Notes on the Dutch Republics of South Africa*, pp58-66.

³⁹ Gronum, *Transportry Runderpes en Poskoetse*, pp115-128.

⁴⁰ G Nicholson, *Fifty Years in South Africa*, pp235-236.

The pandemic had moved south through Kimberley to the Orange River where it was halted by a hastily erected 1,000-mile (1,609 km) fence. Although the barrier was breached in 1897, the 'bible' method of immunization and then the serum-virus method developed by Dr Theiler and others, had resulted in the inoculation of defibrinated blood from salted cattle into healthy herds, which reduced the high mortality.⁴¹ Once the serums became more effective only about 50% of infected cattle later died. The Graaff-Reinet district was fortunate: about 2,000 cattle died from the 11,000 inoculated. The disease eventually reached as far as Uniondale.⁴² The rinderpest killed over 500,000 cattle in the Cape Colony, mainly north of the Orange River, and the Department of Agriculture spent £1,115,844 combating the pandemic. The districts of Aliwal North, Colesberg, the Karoo, southern and eastern Cape and west of the Cape Town-De Aar railway line were the least affected. Two thirds of the cattle in the Cape Colony survived, and from this stock cattle herds bred up again.⁴³

In the Cape Colony unrest due to the stringent quarantine enforced on the blacks led to three tribal uprisings in Pokwane in the Langeberg in December 1896. Sir Gordon Sprigg the Prime Minister immediately called out the Cape Mounted Riflemen under Col EH Dalgety to assist the Cape Police. The Griqualand West Brigade and the Cape Volunteers, plus the burgher forces of Gordonia and Vryburg, were in the field for six months and 1600 men were called out to do duty until August 1897.⁴⁴

The result of the rinderpest pandemic in Griqualand West and Bechuanaland was that these rural communities were reduced to a state of absolute poverty and many drifted to the gold fields and the diamond diggings. In a report of April 1899 on Hay it was stated that the death rate had increased while the birthrate had fallen following the pandemic. The population, suffering from malaria, influenza and diarrhea, were trekking around trying to find grazing for their remaining livestock and the younger members of the families were dying from lack of medical care.⁴⁵

The depression that followed the rinderpest affected every facet of farming society from the stockman to the man who made the whips the teamsters used. Many ruined and desperate men were angry at the quarantine measures, angry with any official from the Cape Colony, and were ripe for rebellion. As the talk of war in the Transvaal got louder, there were many bankrupt and desperate people who were ready to grasp any straw.

⁴¹ CAR, The Cape of Good Hope, *Government Gazette*, No 971 of 1897, explains how to prepare defibrinated blood; Rossiter, 'Rinderpest', in *Infectious Diseases of Livestock*, II, p736.

⁴² Smith, Kenneth Wyndham, *From Frontier to Midlands, A History of the Graaff-Reinet District, 1786-1910*, p92; CAR, Cape of Good Hope, *Government Gazette*, Notice 610 of 1898 lists divisions and portions of divisions quarantined from September 1896; *George and Knysna Herald*, 26 January 1898.

⁴³ CAR, CCP 1/2/1/106, Rinderpest Statistics of the Cape Colony, compiled May 1898. Report of K. Anderson.

⁴⁴ CAR, Cape of Good Hope, *Official Publications*, CCP 1/2/1/103 G3, Final Report of Col EH Dalgety to Secretary for Defence, October 1897; Dr HH Curson, *The History of the Kimberley Regiment*, pp140-141.

The Jameson Raid and political causes of the South African War

The customary causes of the South African War relating to political developments and expansionistic Imperial policies, are listed in parliamentary papers, correspondence between the High Commissioner and the Secretary of State at Whitehall, and in official correspondence between the Imperial Powers and Presidents JSP Kruger of the South African Republic and Marthinus Steyn of the Orange Free State.

A long-standing quarrel over Great Britain's claim to a right of suzerainty over the Transvaal's internal affairs followed the first South African War of 1881. The discovery of gold on the Witwatersrand in 1886 brought about a welcomed improvement in the economy of the once poverty-stricken Boer Republic. Not so welcomed were the thousands of foreigners, known as *Uitlanders* who, though they brought capital and enterprise to the Transvaal, were increasingly rejected by President Kruger for interfering in his country's internal affairs.⁴⁶ By 1894 the 70,000 Transvalers and Free Staters on the gold fields were outnumbered by the 78,000 newcomers. Kruger feared that when these aliens were naturalized the Boers would loose control of the government. The result was that the *Volksraad* extended the naturalization procedures from two to an effective fourteen years.⁴⁷ The issue of the *Uitlanders'* voting rights became a fertile source of tension between a group of immigrants and the Transvaal Government.⁴⁸

Joseph Chamberlain, Secretary of State for the Colonies from 1895, was determined to maintain British interests and pressed the Transvaal for franchise reform. At the same time the so-called 'Reformers', a group of Johannesburg businessmen, dissatisfied with the franchise laws and the dynamite monopoly, schemed to overthrow the Kruger Government. They turned to Rhodes, the Cape Prime Minister and head of the British South Africa Charter Company, who had ambitious plans for Great Britain to be the dominant force in Africa. At New Year in 1896 Dr Leander Jameson led 500 Rhodesian Mounted Police into the Transvaal from the Bechuanaland Border on Rhodes' instigation to support a rising. The Reformers wavered at the last moment, and Jameson's force surrendered ignominiously to a Boer commando under General Petrus Cronjé. The Raid was seen as "one of the most notorious incidents in the history of the British Empire", and cast doubts on the good faith of the British Government towards

⁴⁵ CAR, CCP 1/2/1/106 A 67 -1899, Agricultural distress in Griqualand West; CAR, CCP 1/2/1/106, G 72 of 1898, Rinderpest Statistics.

⁴⁶ I Smith, *The Origins of the South African War*, pp45, 173; De Kiewiet, *A History of South Africa*, p119.

⁴⁷ Scheepers Strydom, *Kaapland en die Tweede Vryheidsoorlog*, p21; AN Porter, *The Origins of the South African War*, pp125-131.

⁴⁸ ET Cook, *The Rights and Wrongs of the Transvaal War*, p16 states that citizenships could be obtained in the Orange Free State after two years, but in the Cape Colony it was required only to take the oath and go through a few formalities to become a British citizen.

the Transvaal, which reacted by arming itself. It thrust men into opposing camps, justifying their prejudices and confirming their antagonisms.⁴⁹ As a notable cause of the South African War, the Jameson Raid has ridden deep ruts in South African history.⁵⁰

When the news of the Raid reached the Cape Colony, Jan Hendrik Hofmeyr, the moderate Afrikaner Bond leader who had enjoyed a long-standing political alliance with Rhodes, was shocked at Rhodes' fraudulent dealings and broke with him when he refused to repudiate Jameson.⁵¹ Rhodes resigned from the British South Africa Charter Company and as Cape Premier, but the damage was done. An inquiry into the conspiracy revealed little, though Joseph Chamberlain's name was cleared, but suspicion lingered that many leading politicians from the Colonial Secretary to the Cape Governor, Sir Hercules Robinson, were either implicated in some way or had prior knowledge of the impending raid. An impression spread that the Imperial Government was aware of an imminent rebellion and regretted its failure.⁵²

After the raid President Kruger got what he had been calling for since 1886 - an offensive/defensive alliance with the Orange Free State. The OFS Government had previously turned the request down as a defensive alliance already existed. Fraser, Chairman of the Free State *Volksraad*, said Kruger cherished bitter hostility towards Great Britain, but because the OFS was a small republic, they wanted to remain at peace with the Cape Colony. Under the leadership of President Steyn however, not only was an offensive alliance granted to the Transvaal, but the Free State also gave protocol to a political alliance and placed their burghers at the disposal of the South African Republic. Fraser saw it as a betrayal of their State, and said that it could only end in its destruction.⁵³

In the wake of the Rhodes debacle, Sir Gordon Sprigg, a progressive Kaffrarian, was asked to form a new ministry in the Cape, and took office in a Legislature wracked with animosity. In May 1897 Sir Alfred Milner, newly appointed Governor of the Cape Colony and High Commissioner, arrived at the Cape. His appointment was received with much acclaim.⁵⁴

⁴⁹ De Kiewiet, *A History of South Africa*, p130; Walker, *A History of Southern Africa*, pp454-460.

⁵⁰ Smith, *The Origins of the South African War*, pp70-100; Amery (ed), *The Times History of the War in South Africa 1899-1902*, 1, ppl62-193; Prof CFJ Muller (ed), *500 Years, A History of South Africa*, pl92; GL Kepper, *Zuid Afrikaansche Oorlog Historisch Gedenkboek*, p55.

⁵¹ Hofmeyr, JH, in collaboration with Senator the Hon FW Reitz, *The Life of Jan Hendrik Hofmeyr (Onze Jan)*, p499.

⁵² Tamarkin, *Cecil Rhodes and the Cape Afrikaner*, p239; Phyllis Lewsen, *John X Merriman, Paradoxical South African Statesman*, pp173-6; Deryck Schreuder and Jeffrey Butler, *Sir Graham Bower's Secret History of the Jameson Raid and the South African Crisis, 1895-1902*, Van Riebeeck Society, II-33, pp95, makes pointed references to the whitewashing of Chamberlain and Sir Hercules Robinson.

⁵³ John George Fraser, *Episodes in my Life*, pp84, 111, 113, 121, 187, 205, 210, 218; SF Malan, *Die Rol van J Geo Fraser in die Vrystaat, 1863-1927*, Archives Year Book 1974, pp272-273.

⁵⁴ Porter, *The Origins of the South African War*, p138; Lord Selbourne, Under Secretary for the Colonies described Milner, 'as the best man in the British Empire for the toughest job in the British Empire'.

Prior to the Jameson Raid the colonists in the Cape had united in condemning Kruger's economic policies, which excluded the Cape from the lucrative Transvaal trade. In 1895 Kruger attempted to divert traffic to the recently opened railway line from Delagoa Bay to the Witwatersrand by raising tariffs on the Cape Colony lines. When merchants refused to use the railway and went back to wagons as carriers, Kruger closed the drifts over the Vaal River, which they were using. Rhodes, the Colonial Premier, backed by Chamberlain and supported by the Cape Attorney General, William Philip Schreiner, sent an ultimatum to the SA Republic, who gave way, creating an impression that they would acquiesce under pressure in the future.⁵⁵ When Milner arrived in the Cape he found the English and Afrikaner now divided, shocked by the Jameson Raid and the allegations of corruption, which tainted the once admired Cecil Rhodes.⁵⁶ Milner spent a year travelling around and listening to people and then consulted the Secretary of State, Joseph Chamberlain, in London. Returning to the Cape he made a pointed statement that the Transvaal should adopt a constitution at least as liberal as that of the Free State in order to end interstate friction.⁵⁷

The Progressive Party lost the next election, first in the Cape Legislature in which two political parties opposed one another and Sprigg resigned. William Philip Schreiner, leader of the newly formed South African Party, became the new Cape Prime Minister and Colonial Secretary. John X Merriman became treasurer and JW Sauer Commissioner of Lands. Dr TNG te Water, a leading Bondsman, was Minister Without Portfolio, as was AJ Herholdt, who was Secretary for Agriculture. Richard Solomon, an Independent, became Attorney General.⁵⁸ They were a mixed group untried and divided from the outset, and only Te Water and Herholdt were members of the Afrikaner Bond. This ministry though was referred to as a Bond Government, because, due to its rural support, the Afrikaner Bond was in the driving seat.⁵⁹

Schreiner, brother of the famous writer, Olive Schreiner, and brother-in-law of Frank W Reitz, Secretary to the South African Republic, had strong ties with the Afrikaner community and was closely associated with Hofmeyr, leader of the Afrikaner Bond. Van Heyningen remarked that William Schreiner and Alfred Milner were both idealists with strong convictions.⁶⁰ However Schreiner was indecisive and impractical. JT Molteno, who knew him, said he had a unique ethical and metaphysical outlook on life

⁵⁵ Smith, *The Origins of the South African War*, p62; Schreuder and Butler, *Sir Graham Bower's Secret History of the Jameson Raid and the South African Crisis*, p56.

⁵⁶ Van Heyningen, *The Relations between Sir Alfred Milner and WP Schreiner's Ministry 1899-1900*, pp203-204.

⁵⁷ Walker, *A History of Southern Africa*, p474.

⁵⁸ Walker, *A History of Southern Africa*, p473.

⁵⁹ Kepper, *Zuid Afrikaansche Oorlog Historisch Gedenkboek*, p55 stated, 'De verkiezen van 1898 in de Kaap-kolonie waren voor de Afrikanerpaertij een overwinning'.

⁶⁰ Van Heyningen, *The Relations between Sir Alfred Milner and WP Schreiner's Ministry, 1898-1900*, p206.

and his vision was obscured by mysticism. He was also cocksure and so certain that he was right that he would never admit that he might be wrong on any occasion, he said.⁶¹

As Milner revealed his innate hostility to the Kruger Government and his determination that British paramountcy should prevail, tensions rose between Milner and Schreiner.⁶² The crisis between Great Britain and the Kruger Government had deepened over British demands for franchise reform in the Transvaal. Milner warned Schreiner, in April 1899, that the situation in the Transvaal had become intolerable, and that he would do anything in his power to prevent the opportunity passing without attaining radical reforms. Schreiner feared that the continued intervention of the British Government in the affairs of the SA Republic would lead to disaster.⁶³

On the suggestion of Merriman and the Chief Justice, Sir John Henry de Villiers, Schreiner suggested a conference between President Kruger and the High Commissioner to resolve the contentious *Uitlander* voting rights. There was widespread anxiety about holding such a meeting, and De Villiers wrote to President Steyn, hoping to keep the peace, and urged him to bring his influence to bear on Milner.⁶⁴ However the Transvaal *Volksraad* had already voted to shelve the publication of a draft amendment to the franchise that Kruger wanted to have published for public consideration for a year - even before the start of the conference.⁶⁵ Consequently the five-day Bloemfontein Conference, which maintained the *status quo*, was condemned a failure, but blame was heaped on Milner's shoulders whose manner towards President Kruger had been cold and arrogant.⁶⁶ Worse still the meeting coincided with the publication of a Blue Book that was virtually a declaration of intent by the British Government. It contained Milner's 'helot' dispatch, which maintained that the case for intervention was overwhelming, as well as Chamberlain's reply to the *Uitlander* petition, which contained a vigorous indictment of the Transvaal administration.⁶⁷

Steyn dispatched a large order to Germany for Mausers and cartridges, and an amendment to Ordinance No 6 (Military Service) was proposed in the Free State *Volksraad* that, because medical certificates were often obtained by those who wished to escape commando duty, they should be strictly

⁶¹ JT Molteno, *The Dominion of Afrikanerdom*, pp39-40.

⁶² Hofmeyr, *The Life of Jan Hendrik Hofmeyr (Onze Jan)*, p530.

⁶³ Van Heyningen, *The Relations between Sir Alfred Milner and WP Schreiner's Ministry, 1898-1900*, p222.

⁶⁴ EA Walker, *Lord De Villiers and his Times: South Africa 1842-1914*, p337, Letter from De Villiers to President Steyn.

⁶⁵ *Midland News and Karoo Farmer*, 25 May 1899. Franchise debate in *Volksraad*, proposals shelved for a year.

⁶⁶ Smith, *The Origins of the South African War*, pp272-89; NJ van der Merwe, *Marthinus Theunis Steyn. 'n Lewensbeskrywing*, II, pp163-193; Van Heyningen, *The Relations between Sir Alfred Milner and WP Schreiner's Ministry, 1898-1900*, p227.

⁶⁷ Van Heyningen, *The Relations between Sir Alfred Milner and WP Schreiner's Ministry, 1898-1900*, p229.

monitored as "war clouds are hanging over us".⁶⁸ The German Official History estimated that the SA Republic alone had a reserve of 80,000 rifles and 80 million cartridges, of which 25 million were known to have come through Delagoa Bay, and the remainder through colonial ports to the republics.⁶⁹

An alarmed Natal cabinet submitted a strong minute to Chamberlain on 17 June, offering their help in trying to prevent a war, while Schreiner only asked the Governor verbally on 11 June 1899 to inform Chamberlain that the offer about the franchise made by President Kruger was practical, reasonable and a considerable step in the right direction.⁷⁰

A tremor of nervousness went through the Colony, and pleas appeared in the press asking that the opening of parliament in July 1899 be delayed so as not to embarrass the two contending parties in the negotiations.⁷¹ Sections of the colonial press were alarmed that Schreiner appeared to be intervening in international affairs and advised him "to keep out of the quarrel as everybody knows the usual results that flow from that... as it needs little to provoke warlike measures".⁷² Would Schreiner, with little or no diplomatic skills and less knowledge of strategy, weather the crisis? It was not to be. His statement in the *South African News* sent further shock waves rippling out; "This Government is convinced that no grounds whatever exist for active interference in the internal concerns of the republic". The *Cape Times* pointed out the anomaly in a leader stating that the Cape Cabinet had thrown itself into active opposition to Sir Alfred Milner in his role of High Commissioner, while it remained in accord with him in his other role as Governor of the Cape of Good Hope. The *Oudtshoorn Courant* warned that a critical position in colonial politics had been reached.⁷³ Chamberlain considered the situation sufficiently dangerous to contemplate the possibility of dismissing the Schreiner ministry and dissolving parliament. When he contacted Milner, he found he was unwilling to break with the Schreiner ministry because he thought that a new ministry would produce a cabinet very like the present one.⁷⁴

At this critical point the experienced Merriman, who had been a parliamentarian for two decades, fell strangely silent and did nothing. A Davey referred later to Merriman's 'sensitive conscience' relating to his membership of the Schreiner ministry at the outbreak of the war. Merriman wrote to Lord De Villiers years later and said he regretted that he did not take the bold step of resigning.⁷⁵

⁶⁸ Van der Merwe, *Marthinus Theunis Steyn*, pp 191-195, Resolution by the Orange Free State *Volksraad* 7-6-1899; *The Midland News*, 8 June 1899, 'Free State Raad keeps its cool'.

⁶⁹ General Staff, Berlin, *The German Official Account of the War in South Africa*, Translation by Col WHH Waters, I, October 1899 to February 1900, p20.

⁷⁰ Lewsen, *John X Merriman, Paradoxical South African Statesman*, p210.

⁷¹ *Oudtshoorn Courant*, 22 June 1899.

⁷² *Oudtshoorn Courant*, 22 June 1899, Leader.

⁷³ *Cape Times*, 11 July 1899; *Oudtshoorn Courant*, 10 July 1899, Leader pages.

⁷⁴ C Headlam (ed), *The Milner Papers, South Africa, 1897-1902*, I, p461.

⁷⁵ Arthur Davey, *The British Pro-Boers, 1877-1902*, p104, JH de Villiers Papers, Merriman-Lord de Villiers, 9 January 1916.

Schreiner now determined to keep the Cape Colony out of the war proposed to Milner that the Colony should not be used as a base for operations against the Transvaal provided they did not invade the Cape Colony. Milner pointed out that in the event of war the fighting would then be confined to the northern borders of Natal (who had requested military reinforcements to guard its northern border), and the Imperial and colonial forces had to be under a single command.⁷⁶

Walker and Van Heyningen emphasize Schreiner's dealings with Milner and his attempts to soften the Governor's strident attitude towards the SA Republic and keep the peace. However the measures he took to undermine the defenses of the Cape Colony have not been examined in depth.

Schreiner and the Cape Colonial forces

Commando service in the Cape of Good Hope had a long history. Gilomee states that as early as 1739 in the Dutch East India Company period, it was compulsory for every burgher with an interest in the outlying districts to do commando service.⁷⁷ When the Colonial Government drifted into the Frontier War of 1877 the commando system, according to Walker, had "become rusty, it had no transport, supplies or regulations for controlling volunteers".⁷⁸ A power struggle over the control of the colonial forces resulted in the Governor, Sir Bartle Frere, dismissing Sir John Molteno, the Colony's first Premier under Responsible Government. According to Wilmot, Frere took exception to the interference of John X Merriman in military affairs.⁷⁹ From then on Merriman, bitterly resented Imperial interference in colonial affairs.⁸⁰

Frere then turned to Gordon Sprigg, a Kaffrarian, and asked him to form the next ministry. He promulgated in 1878 the 'Peace Preservation Act' and 'The Burgher Force and Levies Act' but these acts stated that colonial troops could only be called out by the Governor "acting by and with the advice of Executive Council".⁸¹

In 1899 the Cape Colony had a first class colonial defenses; trained soldiers, field guns, excellent officers, arms and ammunition. The standing regiment the Cape Mounted Riflemen, the successors to the Frontier Police, fielded 928 men and was a crack British regiment in all but name, ran its own recruiting office in London. It was permanently stationed in Umtata and Kokstad to keep the peace on the Eastern

⁷⁶ E Walker, *WP Schreiner, A South African*, p176.

⁷⁷ Hermann Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, p59.

⁷⁸ Walker, *A History of Southern Africa*, pp 369,371.

⁷⁹ Wilmot, *The Life and Times of Sir Richard Southey*, pp294-297, Frere called Merriman an irresponsible military dictator in a letter to Southey on 6 February 1878.

⁸⁰ Lewsen, *John X Merriman, Paradoxical South African Statesman*, pp76-77. Merriman entered politics as member for Aliwal North in 1869 and eventually became Cape Prime Minister in 1908.

⁸¹ CAR, Cape of Good Hope *Statutes*, Act 7 of 1878, pp1546-1555.

frontier and to do policing duties. It was armed with Martini-Henry carbines and rifles. The artillery section fielded eight 7-pdr-field guns, three 12-pdr-field guns and six machine guns. However this regiment fell under the control of the Prime Minister's Office and they were called out on his direct orders.⁸² The 26 Volunteer Corps had an authorized strength of 3,703 all ranks and the Cape Garrison Artillery fielded eight 7-pdr field guns and twelve 3-pdr guns. The 900 strong Cape Police fell under the control of the Secretary of the Law Department. Act 32 of 1892 and its Amendment in 1893 had consolidated the defense of the Cape Colony. Under the act any portion of the colonial forces should be deemed to be on active service when it was called out under the Act for service against the enemy or for service in a country or place wholly or partly occupied by an enemy. Training camps for Volunteers and Rifle Clubs also fell under military service.⁸³

In addition to the Cape Volunteers there were 26 Mounted Rifle Clubs with an enrolled strength of 2,500, and 30 Cadet Corps with an enrolled strength of 2,189.⁸⁴ Finally under the 'Burgher Force and Levies Act' all the able-bodied men between eighteen and 50 years were liable for commando duty in times of emergency. The Field Cornet of each of the six wards in the division had to supply a list to the magistrate annually.⁸⁵ As recently as 1897 the Cape Mounted Riflemen and Colonial Volunteers saw active service in Griqualand West during the Pokwane rebellion and earlier in the Warren expedition of 1896.⁸⁶

All through 1899 the Schreiner Ministry, convinced that the Transvaal cause was just, blocked Milner's preparation in case of war, by delaying military manoeuvres and holding up the acquisition of arms.⁸⁷ Merriman clearly supported Schreiner, and in March 1899 was in dispute with the Knysna Rangers. Although he was Colonial treasurer he refused to pay the funds voted by Parliament for the Volunteer's Easter camp. The Rangers were convinced he was trying to provoke them into disbanding.⁸⁸

Merriman was convinced that if the Cape Ministry remained neutral in case of war, the frontier farmers would not rise in rebellion and join the Boer forces. He visited Dordrecht on 6 May 1899 and stated, "The Bond is the chief supporter of the SA Party, which, as a government in power, relies on the Bond for its support. As the Bond members are farmers they will prove to be the last people in the world

⁸² CAR, CCP 10/15, Cape of Good Hope, *Statistical Register of Colonial Forces for 1898*, Cape Mounted Riflemen and Volunteers, p24.

⁸³ Cape of Good Hope, *Statutes*, The Colonial Forces Amendment Act, Act 4 of 1893, under which the Cape Mounted Riflemen could act both as a military and a police forces.

⁸⁴ CAR, Cape of Good Hope, *Statistical Register*, 1898, p24.

⁸⁵ CAR, Cape of Good Hope, *Statutes*, Act 7 of 1878, pp1546.

⁸⁶ Curson, *The History of the Kimberley Regiment*, pp118-119.

⁸⁷ Van Heyningen, *The Relations between Sir Alfred Milner and W P Schreiner's Ministry, 1898-1900*, p241.

⁸⁸ *George and Knysna Herald*, 22 March 1899, 'Knysna Rangers'.

to be revolutionaries".⁸⁹ If Schreiner and Merriman thought that the Dutch farmer would fit into their flabby stereotype and stay at home and plough, they were in for a surprise.

However Schreiner was quite aware of the risk he was running. He wrote to Sir Henry de Villiers and said it was possible that British Territory would be attacked and that the Cape Colony should help repel such an attack, he said. However he had decided, "the labouring oar must be the Imperial Government as they [the Cape Colony] were not equal to taking up such a quarrel".⁹⁰

At the opening of Parliament in July 1899 Schreiner stated that he did not expect an attack on the Colony by the SA Republic, neither did he fear a so-called Native rising.⁹¹ Not so many colonists; as there was a public outcry when it came to light that large quantities of arms were passing through through the Cape to the Orange Free State. The *Cape Times* 14 July stated that the Cape, a British colony, was allowing its ports to remain open for in transit arms shipments to the Dutch Republics. Lewsen states that under a customs convention the Cape could not interfere with the passage of armaments over the Cape Railways to the Free State.⁹² However Gordon Sprigg, leader of the Opposition, stated on 28 August 1899 that in the present circumstances the Cape Ministry was justified in suspending shipments.⁹³ While Schreiner made various disclaimers on the passage of arms to the republics to the north, but he also tabled a defense budget in Parliament in July 1899 that was almost half the previous estimates; £12,000 less was to be spent on ordnance and arms; £9,000 less on the Cape Mounted Riflemen; £50,000 less on the Colonial Volunteers.⁹⁴ What was not widely known was that the colonial government held fairly large consignments of Martini-Henry rifles with the correct caliber ammunition, as well as Lee-Metford ammunition was stored in magazines in towns along the colonial border in the charge of the local magistrate. These towns included Vryburg, Lady Grey, Aliwal North, Barkly East and Douglas.

Events were moving so quickly that apart from the Opposition under Sir Gordon Sprigg, nobody openly opposed Schreiner except Col David Harris of the Griqualand West Command in Kimberley, who was certain that the Boers were going to fight and was determined not to surrender the diamond industry to the republican forces without firing a shot. Convinced in 1896 that war was inevitable, he had persuaded the De Beers Company to buy a battery of six maxims and 750 Lee-Metfords, plus

⁸⁹ *George and Knysna Herald*, 17 May 1899, 'Merriman at Dordrecht'; Lewsen, *John X Merriman, Paradoxical South African Statesman*, p207, refers only to Merriman's Wodehouse visit stating that that political feeling seemed much quieter in this area.

⁹⁰ Walker, *Lord de Villiers and his Times*, p363. Letter from Schreiner to De Villiers.

⁹¹ *Midland News*, 18 July 1899, 'The Estimates'.

⁹² Lewsen, *John X Merriman; Paradoxical South African Statesman*, p213.

⁹³ *Oudtshoorn Courant*, 31 August 1899, 'Parliament. Ammunition Question'.

⁹⁴ *Midland News*, 18 July 1899, 'The Estimates'.

ammunition, and also organized a survey of the town's defensive capacity.⁹⁵ In 1897 he warned the Colonial Defence Commission that the adjoining Republic's armaments were far superior to local artillery, but nothing was done.⁹⁶

The Mayor of Kimberley then telegraphed Schreiner on 12 June 1899 saying that they were hoping that hostilities would be averted, but in the meanwhile they and the surrounding country were defenseless. He requested that the rifles, ammunition, artillery and a battery originally earmarked for Kimberley in the Government store in King William's Town, be consigned to Griqualand West as a matter of urgency. Schreiner refused permission, dismissing Kimberley's fears of war as groundless. The Mayor persisted and pointed out that sending the munitions would allay local unrest and insecurity. Schreiner replied shortly that he could not consider Kimberley's views or meet their wishes.⁹⁷ At Douglas Assistant Magistrate S Tilney had 18,000 rounds of Lee-Metford, plus 3,000 rounds of Martini-Henry ammunition in the local magazine belonging to the Cape Police. Tilney was refused permission to move the cartridges to safety. He even applied to blow the magazine up, but this was turned down because he would magnify the danger of war.⁹⁸ Suspicions grew that the Boer forces were going to invade shortly when a detachment of Transvaal Artillery was seen inspecting the Vaal Bridge north of the city.⁹⁹

Nothing could apparently dissuade Schreiner and his ministry from their appeasement policy, and the Kimberley people said openly "that the party in power favoured the republican forces".¹⁰⁰ While Pakenham argues that the conduct of the war was hampered by the British not taking the Boer forces seriously,¹⁰¹ Schreiner could not or would not realize that all the charming Free Staters he had met on this or that state occasion were now his possible enemies, and would certainly not take him seriously.

Harris then appealed directly to Milner, who realized it would be a political disaster if the diamond industry fell into Boer hands. As High Commissioner he ordered Lieut-Col R Kekewich, the CO of the First Loyal North Lancashire Regiment, to Kimberley with a half battalion of the regiment, as well as gunners and engineers. He was appointed Lieutenant Colonel of colonial forces and Commandant of Colonial Volunteers in Griqualand West and Bechuanaland on 20 September for defensive purposes only.¹⁰² Milner then insisted Schreiner co-sign the proclamation calling out the volunteers and only six days before war broke out The Diamond Fields Artillery, Diamond Fields Horse, Kimberley Regiment,

⁹⁵ Curson, *The History of the Kimberley Regiment*, p145; Breytenbach, *Die Geskiedenis van die Tweede Vryheidsoorlog*, II, pp361-362.

⁹⁶ CCP, Resume of Defence Commission of 1896-1897 (G7 of 1897).

⁹⁷ *Mafeking Mail, Special Siege Slips*, 30 April 1900. 'How Kimberley was deserted by the Cape Government'.

⁹⁸ CAR, CCP 1/2/1/111 Magistrate's report of the Invasion of the Cape Colony by Free State forces.

⁹⁹ *Midland News*, 27 June 1899.

¹⁰⁰ Curson, *The History of the Kimberley Regiment*, p145.

¹⁰¹ Pakenham, *The Boer War*, p77.

¹⁰² CAR, Cd 43, p237, Enclosure 19 in No 99.

Bechuanaland Rifles and Vryburg Mounted Rifles were mobilized - many weeks after the Boer republics had raised their forces. Schreiner eventually gave permission that the Kimberley, Modder and Orange River railway bridges were to be guarded.¹⁰³ He issued a strict order, though, that no civil servant be allowed to defend Kimberley by joining the Kimberley Town Guards or the Volunteers.¹⁰⁴

In early September alarming news spread to Mafeking from the neighbouring Transvaal villages that arms and ammunition were being distributed by the Field Cornets to the local burghers. The Mayor, F Whiteley, called a public meeting on 8 September and it was decided that if the Government supplied the rifles about 500 to 600 colonists could guard the border.¹⁰⁵ When Schreiner ignored their pleas for arms Whiteley turned to Col RSS Baden-Powell, who had arrived in Bechuanaland in July 1899 and appealed to him to raise a force in the Protectorate and Rhodesia to defend Mafeking. When Baden-Powell received permission from the Colonial Government to guard his supplies stored in the town, he moved into Mafeking with the Protectorate Regiment. By the time war broke out he had built a defensive perimeter and organized a force of 1,183 men to guard it. They consisted of the British South Africa Police, the Cape Police, Bechuanaland Rifles and the staff on the railways became the Railway Contingent. The civilians were organized into the Town Guard and the Cape Boy contingent. The 'Black Watch' and a Baralong contingent eventually reached about 500 men. Julius Weil's stores in the town were carrying a large quantity of in-transit goods intended for Matabeleland. He ordered more stock and eventually supplied over 16,000 tons of food, grain and fodder to the military.¹⁰⁶

For the rest a small detachment of Cape Police was stationed in Vryburg, and the Volunteer Force of 75 Vryburg Mounted Rifles was called out, while a Maxim gun arrived on 9 October as armament to defend the town.¹⁰⁷ No attempt was made to defend the Griqualand West villages of Douglas, Campbell, Postmasburg, Griquastad or Kuruman from invasion. The only things they received were official proclamations from the Colonial Government urging them to stay loyal.¹⁰⁸

As the colonists realized that the republicans were arming, public meetings were also held in Vryburg, Queenstown, Aliwal North, Herschel and Modder River where they all appealed in vain for help

¹⁰³ Lewsen, *John X Merriman, Paradoxical South African Statesman*, p213; Curson, *The History of the Kimberley Regiment*, p145; Cape of Good Hope Government Gazette, No 258 1899, 5 October; Walker, *WP Schreiner, A South African*, p191.

¹⁰⁴ *Oudtshoorn Times*, 12 October 1899, 'Kimberley'.

¹⁰⁵ *The Midland News*, 31 August 1899, 'Mafeking agitated'; *Colesberg Advertiser and Afrikaansche Boerevriend*, 8 September 1899, 'News from Mafeking'.

¹⁰⁶ B Willan (ed), *Edward Ross, Diary of the Siege of Mafeking, October 1899-May 1900*, p8.

¹⁰⁷ CAR, Cape of Good Hope, *Debates of the House of Assembly, 1899*, p317; Amery (ed), *The Times History of the War in South Africa*, II, pp271-272; CAR, Cd 43, Proclamation 258, p225.

¹⁰⁸ *Dictionary of South African Biography*, II, WJ de Kock and DW Kruger (eds), WP Schreiner, pp636-638; CAR, Cape of Good Hope Government Gazette, No 277 of 27 October 1899; No 299 of 31 October 1899

from their Government to defend them from invasion.¹⁰⁹ Milner, who was no soldier and suspicious of the Afrikaners, was expecting a quick and easy victory when reinforcements from England arrived. He did not take Schreiner's lack of action seriously. Everybody in the ministry seemed oblivious to the reality that there were too few British forces in South Africa and if the Cape Mounted Riflemen and the Volunteers were not in the field when war broke out, there would be nothing to stop a commando crossing the border and recruiting colonists, particularly the Cape Afrikaner, who would be obvious targets for the Boers.¹¹⁰

The Imperial Authorities took control of the Colonial Forces on 7 October. Schreiner finally co-signed the proclamation under the Colonial Forces Act of 1892 provided that the volunteers were called out only for the defence of the districts in which they were enrolled. By this move Schreiner stopped the Colonies own forces from defending the frontiers. The Cape Mounted Riflemen remained standing at Queenstown, Cofimvaba and Lady Frere until the arrival of Gen Sir Redvers Buller in South Africa. The Cape Garrison Artillery, Prince Alfred's Own Cape Artillery, the Duke of Edinburgh Own Volunteer Rifles, Cape Highlanders, 'B' Coy of Cape Medical Staff Corps, Prince Alfred's Volunteer Guard, Port Elizabeth, First City (Grahamstown Volunteers), Queenstown Rifle Volunteers and the Frontier Mounted Rifles (Cathcart) had to wait until a senior British officer arrived and superseded Schreiner. Walter Stanford, Head of Native Affairs had repeatedly assured Schreiner and Milner that black policy would be to watch events and not take sides. It made no difference; Schreiner was not releasing troops to defend the colony from invasion.¹¹¹ It was said that Schreiner was "mesmerized into a feeling of false security" and amazed General Sir Redvers Buller complained that "Schreiner just stood and did nothing, his Government folded its arms and allowed rebellion to walk unchecked".¹¹²

Consequently the First City Regiment (Marshalls Horse) only left Grahamstown 420 strong at the end of November, while the 522 strong Prince Alfred's Guard was kept in camp on the Port Elizabeth Racecourse until as late as 2 December 1899.¹¹³ The Dukes (Duke of Edinburgh Own Volunteer Rifles) who had mobilized 652 all ranks on 16 October stationed at Matjesfontein, south of Beaufort West, to guard the railway line.¹¹⁴ Schreiner refused to allow Lee-Metfords in the stores to be issued to the

¹⁰⁹ *Cape Times Weekly Edition*, 18 October 1899.

¹¹⁰ Amery (ed), *The Times History*, II, p110.

¹¹¹ Basil Williams, *Record of the Cape Mounted Riflemen*, p59; *Grocott's Daily Mail Weekly War Summary*, 23 March 1900, for comment on the CMR; JW Macquarrie (ed), *The Reminiscences of Sir Walter Stanford*, Van Riebeeck Society II-43, p201.

¹¹² Cape of Good Hope, House of Assembly, 1902. Statement by Dr TW Smartt of Cathcart during a debate on the role of Afrikaner Bond, p25; Van Heyningen, *The Relations between Sir Alfred Milner and WP Schreiner's Ministry, 1898-1900*, p262.

¹¹³ CAR, Cape of God Hope *Government Gazette*, 17 October 1899; R Griffiths, *First City, A Saga of Service*, p64; N Orpen, *Prince Alfred's Guard*, p86.

¹¹⁴ A McKenzie, *The History of the Duke of Edinburgh's Own Rifles*, pp40-44.

Volunteers and announced that Maj HT Tamplin, OC of First City Volunteers since 1896, had been retired.¹¹⁵

After war was declared the Mayor of Grahamstown, Henry Wood, and others called on the Prime Minister on 24 October 1899 to guard his borders, saying that Aliwal North could be defended as there were plenty of 'Easterns' [presumably Colonial Volunteers] ready to prevent the republican forces entering the Colony. Schreiner referred the matter to the General Officer Commanding. Nothing happened.¹¹⁶

Consequently the Cape Police and the Volunteer forces in Mafeking and Kimberley were the only colonial forces on active service during the first month of the war.¹¹⁷ The Cape Colony's border with the Transvaal became an open frontier controlled by the republicans, except for two islands of resistance at Kimberley and Mafeking. Meanwhile the Volunteers remained in training camps, drawing full pay.

That the Cape colonies borders were purposely left undefended by its own Government been disregarded historically, just as the rebellion of the Dutch-speaking colonists during the invasion by republican forces has been taken for granted. If the republican forces had been met with strong opposition from the Cape Garrison Artillery and the Cape Mounted Rifles' artillery at the borders, and if the Cape Colony had a resolute Premier at this critical period other than the quixotic Schreiner, the war would have taken another course and the rebellion would have been a damp squib.

The situation

By May 1899 war was already a possibility and was referred to in the newspapers as 'the situation'. Thousands of foreigners were leaving the Witwatersrand for the Cape and Natal and by October the fleeing refugees had become a flood. D Carmack quoted from Isabella Lipp's description of a trainload of refugees. "So away they went, poor souls, enduring great hardships on the journey to a place of refuge in British territory - packed like sardines in carriages".¹¹⁸

Schreiner appeared to be alone in his conviction that the long drawn out crisis would not end in war. His sister, Olive, wrote in June 1899 that war could be justified "if by no other means can we preserve our own life and freedom from a stronger power, or defend a weaker state or individuals from

¹¹⁵ *Grocotts Daily Mail Weekly War Summary*, 18 November 1899, 'Correspondence'; CAR, Cape of Good Hope *Government Gazette*, 31 October 1899.

¹¹⁶ Cape of Good Hope, *Official Publications*, Telegram C 19-1903.

¹¹⁷ Williams, *The Record of the Cape Mounted Riflemen*, p59.

¹¹⁸ Diana Cammack, *The Rand at War 1899-1902, The Witwatersrand & the Anglo-Boer War*, p57, quoting an extract from Isabella Lipp, 'My diary: fact fiction and fancy'.

the stronger".¹¹⁹ Colonial newspapers all reflected increased concern that hostilities might break out. The *Queenstown Daily Representative* reported from *The Star* on 1 July that the Transvaal Government was making preparations for all eventualities: Schalk Burger, JC Smuts and D Wolmarans were buying up large quantities of foodstuffs and several thousand pounds of tinned provisions.¹²⁰ An example of the worry of the ordinary colonist: on 19 August 1899, a Graaff-Reinet farmer, Thomas Murray of Roodebloem, wrote in his page-a-day diary, "The war news with the Transvaal is serious and it seems as if there must be war now".¹²¹

Not all refugees fled to the Cape or Natal. In August 1899 refugees from Krugersdorp arrived at Mafeking and warned them that the Veld Cornet in Malmani Ward was distributing arms and ammunition to burghers.¹²² Groups of people began arriving in Mafeking from the Free State, saying they were coming to defend the honour of the old flag.¹²³ Kimberley was also crowded with refugees from the Transvaal and the Orange Free State.¹²⁴

There was a feverish purchasing of horses, mules and oxen in the Transvaal, and the newspapers detailed the profits the contractors were making on bullocks being sold to the Transvaal Government. Stock fairs were held all over the Free State, including one at Edenburg on 20 September.¹²⁵

The confusion reigning on the Cape Colony's borders was of strategic advantage to the Boer leaders. While members of the Transvaal forces were veterans of tribal wars, the Free State had not been at war for over 40 years. The Boer forces were largely a burgher force, commandeered in time of war, and an initial series of bloodless victories just over the border on colonial territory would be an immense morale builder.

Hofmeyr had warned both houses of the SA Republic's *Volksraad* in July that there would be no general rising and armed assistance from the Cape. They were British subjects, he said, and many had sworn allegiance to the Queen.¹²⁶ Far more exciting for the Transvaalers were rumours that the colonial Afrikaner was being recruited for the Boer forces at secret meetings. Free State leaders were also spreading exaggerated reports. Elias Grobler of the Orange Free State *Volksraad* sent an inflated report to Steyn on 8 August 1899. He had gone to Colesberg to gather intelligence and wrote that people there had

¹¹⁹ *Midland News and Karoo Farmer*, 2 June 1899, 'Word in Season. An English South African's View of the Situation'.

¹²⁰ *Queenstown Daily Representative*, 1 July 1899, repeated from *The Star*.

¹²¹ TE Murray, *The Roodebloem Diaries*, Private Archives of TET Murray, Roodebloem Graaff-Reinet.

¹²² *Midland News*, 31 August 1899, 'Families leaving owing to threat. Everyone carrying guns'.

¹²³ *Mafeking Mail, Special Siege Slips*, 30 May 1900. Notice requesting all Uitlanders who had defended the old flag to attend a meeting in Mafeking.

¹²⁴ Eudore Thorne, *Indomitable Spirit, the Story of Hanna and Carl Meyer of Kimberley*, p78.

¹²⁵ A Read Lloyd, *Bridging the Divide*, p76; *Colesberg Advertiser*, 8 September 1899, 'Boers grumbling'.

¹²⁶ Lewsen, *Selection from the Correspondence of JX Merriman, 1899-1905*, p78. Letter by Hofmeyr, 25 March 1901.

asked the Free State "to proclaim us or make a start", and they were "ready to stand shoulder to shoulder to throw off the English yoke. Forty thousand Cape Afrikaners promised to support the Republics", he wrote.¹²⁷

Because of family ties over the border, the Cape Afrikaner was an obvious ally for the Boers, but the hoped for 40,000 recruits (equivalent to the total white population of Griqualand West in 1904) were to prove a dream and a delusion. Steyn also announced that once Kimberley was captured large numbers of Afrikaner sympathizers in the northern Cape would join them.¹²⁸ Magistrates also reported to the Law Department in August 1899 that that rumours had spread that the Free State Government planned to commandeer colonists as Free State burghers, blow up bridges and capture the Cape Colony. The sale of rifles had gone up but remained very modest for those supposedly rumoured to be on the brink of rebellion. In Colesberg rifle sales increased from ten to 64 in 1899, at Burghersdorp sales went up from a modest three in 1898 to thirteen in 1899, at Barkly East sixteen more rifles were sold compared to the eight of 1898.¹²⁹

A pamphlet appeared in the *Northern Post and Border News* in September 1899 that warned that only a Boer victory would save the Afrikaner culture from being wiped out by the English. BJ Viljoen, later Combat General and author of this propaganda, aimed at filling the Cape Afrikaner with uncertainty and dread. He claimed that it was only due to the existence of the two independent Afrikaner republics that the Afrikaner in the English colonies was still recognized and tolerated; that British paramountcy was threatened by the victory of the Afrikaner Bond in the Cape Colony; that if the republics fell into the hands of England, the Boers in the Cape Colony and Natal would be disarmed.¹³⁰ The pamphlet's true value was probably to reinforce the convictions of those who intended joining the Boer forces, as it rationalized their actions. President Steyn, in his Declaration of War, also used the same theme that the Afrikaner in the Cape Colony would be wiped out.¹³¹ Still the Free State President did not pursue the threat of Afrikaner extinction with Milner in his many letters before and after the invasion of the Cape Colony, thus raising doubts whether this was really a valid concern. Milner, as High Commissioner,

¹²⁷ FAR, MT Steyn Collection, A156, 1/1/1, letter from ER Grobler, 12 August 1899.

¹²⁸ Amery (ed), *The Times History*, II, p85; Breytenbach, *Die Geskiedenis van die Tweede Vryheidsoorlog*, I, p399. The Transvaal Government said they expected 40,000 to join them once Ladysmith had fallen.

¹²⁹ Cape of Good Hope, *Official Publications*, A 18 – 1900, Sales of arms sold throughout the Colony.

¹³⁰ CAR, Cd 43, Further correspondence relating to affairs in South Africa, Enclosure 50, Appeal to Afrikaners, 30 September 1899.

¹³¹ Van der Merwe, *Marthinus Theunis Steyn*, I, 27 September 1899, p253. *Men wil door us uit te roeien de Afrikaner partij in de Kaap Kolonie vernietigen.*

issued a proclamation objecting to the statement that the Dutch colonist would be deprived of his constitutional rights.¹³²

Once the ultimatum had expired, the republican forces were at war with Great Britain. While the main thrust of the Transvaal invasion was into Natal, this thesis will deal only with the republican invasions into the Cape Colony. When the Boer forces crossed into the Cape Colony in the vicinity of Mafeking, Schreiner announced in Parliament on 12 October 1899 that he still intended keeping the Colony aloof from the struggle. He said he had resigned himself to the war with the SA Republic, but was now trying to avoid conflict with the Free State. He ignored the Free State's announcement of 29 September that it would stand by its allies, and that it had mobilized on 2 October 1899 and the Frere Bridge at Aliwal North had been closed on the northern side and that a Rouxville Commando had set up camp at Beestekraal, nine miles (fourteen kms) from Aliwal North, on 5 October.¹³³

There were about 5,000 British troops stationed in the Cape Colony (apart from the forces in Kimberley); the Royal Berkshire Regiment held Stormberg and Naauwpoort; West Yorkshire Regiment with Rimington Scouts were at De Aar and the 2nd Northhamptonshire Regiment were holding the Orange River Bridges while the 12th Lancers and the Royal Munster Fusiliers reinforced them.¹³⁴ It would be three weeks before the Army Corps even arrived in Cape Town. However the Schreiner Ministry insisted that these troops were adequate to deal with the situation.

Rebellion in Bechuanaland

The Transvaal commandos mobilized on 28 September 1899, aware that only Kimberley, Mafeking and possibly Vryburg would resist them. Gen Piet Cronjé with 6,000 men massed at Ottoshoop, and after the ultimatum expired on 11 October 1899 the commando cut the fences and walked their horses over the border into the Cape Colony. There was nobody to stop them. The frontier had been left unguarded and the balance of power tipped in favour of the republicans. First the Boer forces under Hercules de la Rey of Lichtenburg wrecked the railway line near Maritzani then they derailed a train returning from Vryburg loaded with the two 7-pdr-guns. According to L Scholtz, De la Rey tried to persuade Cronjé to cross the border into Griqualand West near Fourteen Streams and bypass Mafeking,

¹³² CAR, Cd 43, Further correspondence relating to affairs in South Africa, Enclosure 18 in No 99 by Sir A Milner, 23 November 1899.

¹³³ *Oudtshoorn Courant*, 5 October 1899, 'Rouxville Commando'.

¹³⁴ Amery, *The Times History*, VII, pp20-21; Williams, *Record of the Cape Mounted Riflemen*, p58.

but Cronjé, known for his obstinacy, refused. Later when Cronjé was ordered south against his will, he left 2,500 burghers behind at Mafeking to continue what Scholtz called 'a pointless siege'.¹³⁵

Mafeking was a fairly prosperous centre surrounded by a region barely recovering from the disaster of the rinderpest. Of the 577 voters of Ward 1, or 73% of the Voter's roll of Mafeking, the vast majority were paid wages or received salaries and were not dependant on the rural economy for survival. Many loyal farmers, who warned the magistrate repeatedly since early August that the Transvalers were boasting that they were coming to take their cattle, entered Mafeking to defend the town. Those that remained on their farms were left unmolested until Gen JP Snyman took charge.¹³⁶ Nobody in Mafeking itself rebelled. However at least ten men, including a carpenter, Peter Green, and a butcher, Cornelius Swartz, were retained in the local gaol as suspected spies until "affairs were settled". The accused said they were quite satisfied being kept in prison.¹³⁷

Twelve voters joined the Boers in Wards 2 to 5 and played a minor role on the fringe of events. David Hermanus Matthysen de Koker, senior, 55, of Mooiplaats, Mafeking boasted he was going to join the Boer forces in the Transvaal and would return a commandant. He reappeared a Veld Cornet, sporting a Mauser, two bandoleers and an ammunition waistcoat. He set to work with a will; commandeered men into the Boers forces, rounded up cattle and wrecked extensive sections of the railway line.¹³⁸ Forty rebels traced to the Vryburg Voters roll were a section of Ward 4 of the Mafeking list. By the end of October C Bell, the Magistrate, heard that 40 rebels had joined the laager and had elected Johannes le Roux of Rooidammetjie Laager Commandant; Johannes Stephanus Maritz of Woodside was Assistant Veld Cornet.¹³⁹

In 1899 370 aliens had been naturalized under the Cape Colonial Aliens Naturalization Acts of 1883 and 1889. More than half were not European immigrants, but had moved into the Cape Colony from all over the Transvaal and the Orange Free State and taken out British citizenship. Twenty-five former republicans moved to the Mafeking district, and 22 of them became rebels.¹⁴⁰ It is intriguing that so many republicans moved into Bechuanaland just prior to the war, especially as the districts were poverty-stricken. These new colonists were active rebels, probably because they remained loyal to the republics or because the pressure to assist the republican forces was too strong to resist.

¹³⁵ Leopold Scholtz, *Waarom die Boere die Oorlog Verloor het*, p57.

¹³⁶ CAR, AG 2038, Correspondence Anglo-Boer War and High Treason, Mafeking 1900-1903, Folio 24, Report on 50 cases, Class 2, 6 December, 1901; CAR, CCP 1/2/1/111, A94, Occupation of the Cape Colony by Orange Free State forces, Magistrate's report on the district of Mafeking by C Bell CC and RM.

¹³⁷ *Mafeking Mail, Special Siege Slips*, 30 November 1899. 'Summary Court of Justice'.

¹³⁸ CAR, AG 2038, Correspondence Anglo-Boer War and High Treason, Mafeking, Folio 24, Report on 50 cases, Class 2, 6 December 1901; CAR, AG 3558, Register of Rebels who are Prisoners of War.

¹³⁹ CAR, CCP 1/2/1/111 Magistrate's Reports of the Invasion of the Cape Colony by Free State forces, report of C Bell.

Most of the rebels lived with their families in the laager at Rietfontein twelve miles (nineteen kms) south of Mafeking. Despite this a pro-British Baralong chief, Saane, who was their prisoner, organized runners to send intelligence on Boer movements and other news into Mafeking.¹⁴¹ A former Transvaler from Wolmaranstadt, Arnoldus Mauritius Reinike, of Papiessvlakte, was appointed Veld Cornet and with David de Koker, forcibly commandeered colonists. In the case of Walter and Richard Kent of Klipparani, they joined after De Koker threatened to shoot them both.¹⁴² Another leading rebel Hendrik Jacobus Bruwer (formerly of Bethlehem) now living at Blinkklip, looted the stores from Maritzani to as far north as Mochud with a party of rebels on the orders of the Boer officers. Although the Cape Police in the vicinity had withdrawn to Mafeking, there were rebels who resisted petty crime, uncertain who would be the victors in the conflict.¹⁴³

When Cronjé left Mafeking on 20 November 1899 an unknown number of rebels went with the Boer forces, including Abraham Isaac van Niekerk of Rietfontein, later captured at Paardeberg and sent to St Helena. Not everybody went willingly. Willem Gobey of Setlagoli deserted after three days at the Modder River and walked back 200 miles (322 kms), pretended that he was ill, and then went into hiding until the relief forces arrived.¹⁴⁴

Cattle commandeered at Mafeking, as well as the stock removed from the country stores, was sent by rail to Modder River to feed the republican forces. By this time the morale of the defenders of the siege was exciting worldwide admiration which was in contrast to the morale of the attacker. F Hill of Kroonstad wrote to his wife about a letter a friend had written from Mafeking, in which he said, "we despair of taking the place, it is too well defended and the terrain is too open".¹⁴⁵

After Mafeking had been invested for a month Gen Snyman, leader of the Marico and Rustenburg burghers, took command of the assault on the defences. Between the first week of November and the end of December the Boer forces shelled and sniped at the defenders in Mafeking at irregular intervals, killing

¹⁴⁰ CAR, Cape of Good Hope, *Government Gazette*, 17 November 1899, notice 857 of 1899.

¹⁴¹ Ross, *The Diary of the Siege of Mafeking*, pp21, 210; A Smith, 'Diary kept during the siege of Mafeking by Alexander Moffat' in *Africana Notes and News*, XXV, No 2, May 1982.

¹⁴² CAR, AG 2038, Folio 20, Preliminary Investigation, 27 October 1900; Cape of Good Hope, *Government Gazette*, No 857 of 1899. AM Reinike, former address Heilbron, Orange Free State, was listed in the Aliens Naturalization List.

¹⁴³ Ross, *Diary of the Siege of Mafeking*, Report of Sergt Matthews of the Cape Police, 12 November, 1899, p44; CAR, AG 2038, Correspondence Anglo-Boer War and High Treason, Mafeking 1900-1903, Folio 12, 7 July, 1901; CAR, AG 2117, Class 1 Rebels charged with High Treason under the Indemnity and Special Tribunals Act of 1900 during November 1901.

¹⁴⁴ FAR, SO/POW, No 4303 in list marked 'Transvaal list of Prisoners of War'; CAR, AG 2038, Folio 29, Statement by Mafeking Magistrate, 14 March 1903.

¹⁴⁵ F Hill, long letter to his wife from Kroonstad, 19 November 1899, Private Archives of Mrs J Muller of Rondebosch, Cape Town.

eleven people and wounding ten.¹⁴⁶ Snyman was a ruthless man, heartily despised by many of his own men. He forced 80 more colonists to join until there were about 120 rebels on commando, and drove what stock they had into the main laager.¹⁴⁷

By the end of January 1900 Sol Plaatje, interpreter in the Magistrate's Office, reported "All the Boers in the district, except Mr Vos our Field Cornet at Maritzani, have now rebelled. He has been arrested three times and taken to the laager, and each time he swore he would never take up arms even if they wanted to shoot him. He has received a final notice that if he stuck to his view all his stock would be taken and his children sent away from Mafeking".¹⁴⁸ A number of black colonists joined the rebels and were implicated in various acts with them.¹⁴⁹

The *Mafeking Mail, Special Siege Slip* of December 1899 states that "to the everlasting shame of the party the Bond Ministry intended betraying Mafeking into the hands of the Boers.... Pretoria never dreamed that they would have any more difficulty with Mafeking than they did with Pretoria".¹⁵⁰ The area under siege was porous and siege slips reached the Boer forces. Who knows just how the rebels construed the statement. It might possibly even have been seen as a permission to join the Boer forces.

The Boer republics had not been co-signatories to the First Hague Convention signed by Great Britain and representatives of 24 states on 29 July 1899. However Sir John Ardagh, Director of Military Intelligence during the war, who assisted in drafting the Hague Regulations, stated that "the Boers have not acceded formally to the Hague Convention and its provisions are not binding technically in a war between a contracting and a non-contracting power; the consequence is to relegate... what is not permissible, to the general body of International Law, in which principles identical with the above have for many years been incorporated. For practical purposes, therefore, the Hague Convention may properly be appealed to by either side".

Spies states that contemporary assessment of the morality or otherwise of the actions of the belligerents was based on the principles of International Law, and that the Hague Convention was the yardstick used to judge the conduct of the war.¹⁵¹ Was it therefore acceptable for the Boer forces to compel colonists into their military forces through the practise of commandeering? It appears not, as this

¹⁴⁶ Smith (ed), 'Diary Kept during the Siege of Mafeking by Alexander Moffat', in *Africana Notes and News*, pp50-51.

¹⁴⁷ CAR, CCP 1/2/1/111, A94, Occupation of the Cape Colony by Orange Free State forces, Magistrate's report; AP Smit and L Maré (eds), *Die Beleg van Mafeking. Dagboek van Abraham Stafleu*, pp168-169.

¹⁴⁸ Comaroff (ed) *The Boer War Diary of Sol T Plaatje*, p6; CAR, CCP 1/1/39. Refers to either Jan Albertus or Willem Jacobus Voss of Duivenhoek.

¹⁴⁹ CAR, AG 2117, Class 1 Rebels charged with High Treason under the Special Tribunals Act of 1900 during November 1901.

¹⁵⁰ *Mafeking Mail, Special Siege Slips*, 20 December 1900. 'Pretoria Plan of Campaign'.

¹⁵¹ SB Spies, 'The Hague Convention of 1899 and the Boer Republics', in *Historia, Journal of the Historical Association of South Africa*, XV (I), March 1970, pp47-48.

was a direct violation of Article 44, which states "Any compulsion of the population of occupied territory to take part in operations against its own country is prohibited", while Article 45 also states "Any pressure on the population to take the oath to the hostile Power is prohibited".¹⁵²

Blockading Mafeking was a straightforward manoeuvre, but Snyman lacked the will and the tactical skills to bring the besiegers to capitulation. The 155mm Long Tom shells were defective, while Snyman, apparently unaware of the extent of the stocks held in Weil's store, decided to starve the besiegers into submission.¹⁵³ A more pressing problem for the 1,500 Boers was their own supplies. Although stuff arrived spasmodically via Ottoshoop, food became an ever-increasing problem as only 2,500 head of cattle apparently survived the rinderpest in that district, while the pandemic also decimated cattle stocks over the border. Patrols combed the surrounding farms for stock, and Abraham Stafleu mentioned an instance when the Rustenburg patrol brought in 150 slaughter sheep belonging to Thys Snijman, and David de Koker acted as guide when a Marico patrol went out on a cattle raid only to find the stock had vanished.¹⁵⁴

Bernard Mbenga has pointed out that black people were active participants in a wider range of roles during the war. While the role of the Bakgatla and the Derdepoort attack of November 1899 is beyond the scope of this thesis, it does reveal that the general raiding of 'black' cattle by the Boer forces and vice versa throughout Bechuanaland and south western Transvaal was extremely widespread.¹⁵⁵ The blacks commandeered by the Boer forces also had to wait on the men serving in the trenches. They complained bitterly that they were forced to crawl in and out of the trenches, as the sniping from Mafeking was so lively.¹⁵⁶

By December 1899 the black civilians in the *Stadt* were becoming short of food, and soup kitchens were started while Baden-Powell, in trying to reduce their numbers, ordered that blacks could be issued passes to leave.¹⁵⁷ To counteract this Snyman ordered that the women and children had to be driven back, and on 23 December 1899 commanded that anybody seen leaving Mafeking, whether white or black, were not to be captured but were to be executed. If the burghers did not obey they would be punished, he stated. His senior officers, including PJ van der Merwe of the State Artillery, were horrified and objected, calling the order murder. On 6 January 1900 four commandeered burghers - rebels - were

¹⁵² The Avalon Project at Yale Law School, 'Laws of War: Laws and Customs of War on Land (Hague II), 29 July 1899, <http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/lawofwar/hague02.htm>, p13.

¹⁵³ L Bischoff, *The Long Tom Saga*, p7.

¹⁵⁴ Smit and Maré, *Die Beleg van Mafeking*, pp164, 187.

¹⁵⁵ B Mbenga, 'The Role of the Bakgatla of the Pilansberg in the South African War' in Greg Cuthbertson, Albert Grundlingh, and Mary-Lynn Suttie (eds.), *Writing a Wider War: Rethinking Gender, Race, and Identity in the South African War, 1899-1902*, p85.

¹⁵⁶ *Mafeking Mail, Special Siege Slips*, 2 December 1899. 'Latest News'.

¹⁵⁷ A Smith, *Diary Kept During the Siege of Mafeking*, pp11, 309.

ordered to act as a firing squad when two blacks, who were reported to have stolen ten cattle, were executed.¹⁵⁸

On 16 January 1900 Snyman telegraphed a local war council's decision to shoot stock thieves on sight to Gen Joubert.¹⁵⁹ A Veld Cornet had been severely reprimanded for not telling his burghers that they had to shoot blacks, and Cmdt Botha had also been ordered to visit all the laagers and read the order to the men.¹⁶⁰ An alarmed Veld Cornet from Klein Marico telegraphed President Kruger and asked if they had permission to shoot captured blacks. Kruger countermanded the order, and on 21 January 1900 ordered that stock thieves should be sentenced to manual labour or corporal punishment.¹⁶¹ Snyman deliberately flouted this order as well as the laws and customs of war relating to the treatment of civilians. Sol Plaatje said Monthuselsi, a Baralong who lived in the *Stadt* and carried a pass to raid cattle, was shot dead by rebels.¹⁶² Nonetheless cattle raiders from Mafeking continued to loot Boer cattle, and under Mathakgong captured twelve oxen near Maritzani, losing two in a skirmish with the Boer forces, but managed to drive the rest back.¹⁶³

By the end of February 1900 Baden-Powell warned his outposts that he was expecting the Boers to drive blacks into Mafeking, in order to give them more mouths to feed. A report on the soup kitchen in the *Stadt* said the blacks were starving.¹⁶⁴ The desperate war over cattle and food continued. On 23 March three Baralong men out looting cattle reported killing three Boers near Jackal tree, one of them was then wounded in the leg and Boers pursuing the blacks, cut his throat. A rebel, Lottering of Maritzani, who captured a cattle rustler, wanted the man to be his servant, but his son took him outside and shot him instead.¹⁶⁵ When news spread in early April that a column was on its way to Mafeking the rebels fled leaving their wives behind, the relief forces then captured some of the men trekking into the Transvaal.

Vryburg was another poverty-stricken district south of Mafeking, despite this 134 families from the Boer republics had settled in the district and been naturalized in 1899.¹⁶⁶ With numbers swelled by so many new colonists, it's hardly surprising that the loyalties of the Vryburg inhabitants were divided. There had been a fresh outbreak of rinderpest in the district in June, and those whose farms were in

¹⁵⁸ Smit and Maré, *Die Beleg van Mafeking*, pp167-182.

¹⁵⁹ Fransjohan Pretorius, *Life on Commando during the Anglo-Boer War 1899-1902*, p269.

¹⁶⁰ CAR, AG 2038, Correspondence Anglo-Boer War and High Treason, Mafeking 1900-1903, Folio 12, Regina v BC Lottering and JS Maritz, 4 October, 1901.

¹⁶¹ Pretorius, *Life on Commando during the Anglo-Boer War 1899-1902*, p269; CAR, Cd 888, Further correspondence relative to the treatment of natives by the Boers, January 1900.

¹⁶² CAR, AG 2038, Correspondence Anglo-Boer War and High Treason, Mafeking 1900-1903, Folio 18, Application for Bail, 5 June 1901, and Preliminary Investigation Class 1, Folio 20, 27 October, 1900.

¹⁶³ *Mafeking Mail, Special Siege Slips*, 16 February 1900. 'Our beef providers'.

¹⁶⁴ *Mafeking Mail, Special Siege Slips*, 23 February 1900. 'General Orders'.

¹⁶⁵ *Mafeking Mail, Special Siege Slips*, 22 March 1900. 'Local News'.

¹⁶⁶ CAR, Cape of Good Hope, *Government Gazette*, 17 November 1899, Aliens Naturalization Act No 857, 1899.

quarantine verbally abused the police at Dry Hartz.¹⁶⁷ The Mayor, who had left Vryburg when war was declared, complained that the Town Council sent a string of appeals to the Schreiner Government asking for assistance to enable them to defend themselves and failed to receive a single reply.¹⁶⁸

When the Boer forces reached Vryburg, colonists flocked to join them in large numbers. A meeting was held at Tweefontein and a deputation was sent to the Transvalers to inform them that the Vryburgers would join the republican forces under certain conditions:

- that as they all had heavy mortgages on their properties, they requested the Transvaal Government to cancel these mortgages after the war;
- that properties belonging to the Chartered Company and the English, who had fled across the border, be granted to people who had no fixed property;
- that their wives be cared for.

According to a loyalist, Mr JJ van der Merwe of Morgenzon, Taung, his proposal that they, as British colonists, remain neutral in the war, was shouted down at the meeting. He was later told that the Transvaal leader accepted the proposal to remit mortgages, but the colonists had to drive the English into the sea first. The decision to join the Transvalers was agreed on at meetings throughout the district.¹⁶⁹ Of the 30 transport drivers, 29 rose in rebellion, giving credence to the idea that it was the wretched state of their economy that drove people to rebellion as much as anything else.¹⁷⁰ A Mr J Oliver of Barkly West said that many people rose in rebellion spontaneously and young people were promised that they would receive half the loot.¹⁷¹

In Kuruman, the commandant of the colonial burgher forces, teacher and secretary of the Afrikaner Bond, Jacobus Albertus van Zyl, suggested at a meeting they invite the Transvalers into Griqualand West.¹⁷² Many of those who joined Van Zyl were former Free Staters who had been naturalized. They included the Van der Merwe family of Langkloof, Celliers of Steenbokkloof, Claasens of Aarkop, P Bothma, CJ Steyn and the Peens family.¹⁷³

At Vryburg loyal inhabitants who had not left the village when war broke out, met and decided that "the Transvaal troops would not invade a place where there were no troops to fight". Magistrate R

¹⁶⁷ *Cape Times Weekly Edition*, 25 August 1899.

¹⁶⁸ *Cape Times Weekly Edition*, 18 October 1899.

¹⁶⁹ *Conference of Loyalists, held at The Paarl on August 29 and 30, 1902*, p56. Date of meeting given as 31 October appears to be in error as Transvalers entered Vryburg on 21 October 1899.

¹⁷⁰ CAR, Cape of Good Hope, *Government Gazette*, 17 November 1899, Aliens Naturalization Act No 857, 1899; CAR, AG 3500, Vryburg voters Roll, 1899.

¹⁷¹ *Conference of Loyalists*, p8.

¹⁷² CAR, AG 2037, Folio 15, Statements by surrendered Rebels from May to July 1900.

¹⁷³ CAR, AG 2035, Folio 35, Document on the Langeberg and Kuruman Rebels, 14 December 1900.

Tilliard, a recent arrival, agreed that it was impossible to defend the town under the circumstances.¹⁷⁴ The Cape Police and the Vryburg Volunteers, who were asked to withdraw, moved to Kuruman, which they defended until ammunition ran out. Charles Sonnenberg, MLA for Vryburg, said during the following session of Parliament that had Vryburg been properly armed they would have defended the place with the same spirit as Kimberley and Mafeking. Schreiner at that stage continued to insist that at the time there were no British troops or colonial forces available to establish a fighting frontier.¹⁷⁵

Gen JH de la Rey, with 1,200 burghers and three field pieces, rode unopposed into Vryburg on 21 October, his numbers swelled by 102 former republicans who had recently been naturalized, as well as colonists who had joined the Transvalers at Leeuwspruit.¹⁷⁶ De la Rey hoisted the *Vierkleur* at the Court House and took possession of Vryburg on behalf of the SA Republic, and announced that the whole of Bechuanaland and Griqualand West would be incorporated into the Orange Free State. Once the *Vierkleur* was raised, it would only be lowered again over their dead bodies, he said. De la Rey promised that people who remained quietly at home would not be molested, and officials and those who wanted to leave could do so.¹⁷⁷ The proclamation read by De la Rey did not formally annex the occupied territory or state that under it colonists were compelled to take up arms as Transvaal or Free State burghers.¹⁷⁸

The Boer republics' objective was to destroy British imperialism in South Africa by hoisting the Transvaal flag; and by proclaiming both Bechuanaland and Griqualand West part of the Orange Free State, the unity between the republics was emphasised. Loyalists condemned the proclamation as a 'cute' move aimed at deluding the colonial Boer, but charges of high treason seemed far away after the hasty withdrawal of the Cape Police and Vryburg Volunteers.¹⁷⁹

According to the Magistrate 575 Vryburg men joined the Boers and signed commandeering notes, which they regarded as legal documents. Many believed that if they were commandeered they could not be held liable for joining the Boer forces. Among the former Free Staters who took a leading role were Abraham Paulus Pretorius, formerly of Hoopstad, and Coenraad Hendrik, Schalk Willem and Wynand Groenewald, all formerly of Bethulie who had been naturalised that year.¹⁸⁰ According to 18-year-old Lukas J Groenewald of Zoutfontein, a younger member of the Groenewald clan, a Stellaland Commando

¹⁷⁴ CAR, CCP 1/2/1/111, A94, Occupation of the Cape Colony by Orange Free State forces, Magistrate's report; *Cape Times Weekly Edition*, 23 October, 1899.

¹⁷⁵ Cape of Good Hope, *Debates of the House of Assembly*, 1900, pp317-18.

¹⁷⁶ CAR, AG 3500, Vryburg Voter's Roll; Cape of Good Hope, *Government Gazette*, Aliens Naturalization Act 1883 and 1899, No 857 of 1899.

¹⁷⁷ Breytenbach, *Die Geskiedenis van die Tweede Vryheidsoorlog*, I, pp394-395.

¹⁷⁸ Amery, (ed), *The Times History*, II, p273.

¹⁷⁹ *Cape Times Weekly Edition*, 25 October 1899.

¹⁸⁰ CAR, AG 3500, Vryburg Voter's Roll; Cape of Good Hope, *Government Gazette*, Aliens Naturalization Act 1883 and 1899, No 857 of 1899.

was raised.¹⁸¹ Some of them set off to Kuruman under Cmdt AJ van der Merwe, but the bulk joined De la Rey's force proceeding towards Kimberley on 11 November 1899.¹⁸²

Few rebels had any military experience or the extra supplies of food that would prove essential for survival. The name of the Vryburg rebel commandant has not been ascertained, but they rode off, casually mixed in with the Boer forces, and clearly the success or failure of the future campaign would be in the hands of the burghers of the SA Republic and the Orange Free State. Rebels became involved in manning the Boer garrison at Vryburg and Kuruman, looting shops such as Colley's, Honey's and Rouxville's store, and later they also looted the Olifantshoek police station. They were also involved in commandeering stock and horses, going on patrol, bearing arms at Kuruman, Fourteen Streams and Kimberley, being flag bearers during the expedition to Gordonia and Kenhardt and the shooting of three soldiers watering horses.¹⁸³

V/C JA Visser remained behind in Vryburg and organized the recruitment of further forces, set up administration and commandeered stock, while JA van Zyl was appointed Landdrost of Kuruman. Newly recruited colonists were part of the new administration, and as law and order collapsed, De la Rey's orders forbidding looting were disregarded. On 20 October, Kekewich issued a counter proclamation to that of Gen De la Rey, declaring any proclamation of annexation to be null and void, and warning the rebels of the consequences.¹⁸⁴

Under orders from Gen PJ Joubert 400 English-speaking loyalists were forced to leave Vryburg on 17 November 1899. They were ordered to travel to the Cape Colony via Christiana, but when some of the wagons broke down they tried to turn back. The Free State Landdrost at Vryburg put them on the road again because he said local rebels threatened to resign if they returned.¹⁸⁵ Their journey to Hopetown eventually took six weeks and the Prime Minister was blamed for their situation. A hostile press complained "Schreiner is morally responsible for the lack of preparedness of the Colony to repel the invaders, and has openly and in a barefaced manner sympathised with the enemies of the Queen".¹⁸⁶

Taung, a village of trading stores with a population of 2,000 black people, was occupied by 500 men led by Cmdt JF (Tollie) de Beer of the Bloemhof Commando on 16 October. He crossed the frontier at Pudimoe with 800 men, raised the *Vierkleur* and occupied the government buildings. V/C JH van der

¹⁸¹ Bottomley, John, "Stinkafrikaners" and social stereotypes: The Anglo-Boer War reminiscences of LJ Groenewald', in *New Contree*, No 46 (November 1999). Groenewald's story is related in an authentic warts and all style shorn of posturing heroics.

¹⁸² CAR, CCP 1/2/1/111, A94, Occupation of the Cape Colony by Orange Free State forces, Magistrate's report; Bottomley, Anglo-Boer War reminiscences of LJ Groenewald', p1; Breytenbach, *Die Geskiedenis van die Tweede Vryheidsoorlog*, I, pp395-396.

¹⁸³ CAR, AG 2037, Folio 35, taken from lists of treason charges, June and July 1900.

¹⁸⁴ Amery (ed), *The Times History*, II, p276.

¹⁸⁵ *Cape Times Weekly Edition*, 21 December 1899.

Walt of Sterkfontein, Vryburg leading a party of 35 rebels, read a commandeering proclamation saying that nobody could remain neutral. The Boers commandeered from loyalist shops, and the Government herd, inoculated against rinderpest, was taken as valuable booty when local rebels handed these cattle over to Boer forces. Food was soon scarce, and while black people were forced to live on locusts, needy rebels were supplied from food depots at Christiana.¹⁸⁷

The main Cape Police contingent began to fall back on Kimberley. They were then instructed by Col Kekewich to reinforce the police post at Kuruman that was being held by Capt A Bates and 35 men. The combined force held out from 13 November to 1 January against 1,000 Boers. The siege was a desultory affair marked by some brisk firing early and late, and quiet during the heat of the day. The garrison eventually surrendered at New Year after they came under fire from an old 7-pounder gun sent by President Kruger. The gunner used 90 rounds to find the range, but when he did, the damage was critical and the garrison raised the white flag as their ammunition had also run out. Schalk Groenewald of Zoutfontein was the only rebel to be wounded.¹⁸⁸ By New Year 1900 the whole of Bechuanaland and Griqualand West, except for Kimberley and Mafeking, was under republican control.¹⁸⁹

Martial Law

The British proclaimed Martial Law on 15 October 1899 in Natal, Mafeking, Vryburg, Taung, Barkly West, Kimberley and Herbert, and it was extended on 15 and 16 November 1899 to the districts of Colesberg, Steynsburg, Albert, Molteno, Aliwal North, Wodehouse, Glen Grey, Queenstown, Cathcart and Hay. It was proclaimed in the face of invasion to assist the military, and in cases of rebellion to enable them to restore order. Sir Redvers Buller's first memorandum on Martial Law dealt with the object of the proclamation, detailed who would be empowered to administer it, and warned its administrators not to interfere with the civil rights of peaceful citizens. Principal offences under Martial Law were treasonable or seditious acts or words, and enlisting or engaging in the military forces of the enemy. Further offences were aiding and abetting the enemy, and trading with and supplying goods to them. It

¹⁸⁶ *Grocotts Daily Mail Weekly War Summary*, 4 November 1899.

¹⁸⁷ CAR, AG 2049, Correspondence Anglo-Boer War and High Treason, Vryburg 1900-1903, Preliminary Investigations on the occupation of Taung, held by R Tillard, RM, 4 August, 1900; CAR, CCP 1/2/1/111, A94, Occupation of the Cape Colony by Orange Free State forces, Magistrate's report.

¹⁸⁸ CAR, CCP 1/2/1/111, A94, Occupation of the Cape Colony by Orange Free State forces, Magistrate's report; Breytenbach, *Die Geskiedenis van die Tweede Vryheidsoorlog*, I, 1969, pp405-407; Bottomley, Anglo-Boer War reminiscences of LJ Groenewald'.

¹⁸⁹ CAR, AG 2037, Correspondence Anglo-Boer War and High Treason, Kuruman 1900-1904, Document re Langeberg rebels, 16 December, 1900; CAR, AG 2062, Correspondence Anglo-Boer War and High Treason, Miscellaneous, Return of Investigation on charges of High Treason, Albert, June, 1903.

was also an offence to destroy bridges, railways or the telegraph, and commit acts endangering the safety of Her Majesty's forces.

Military courts consisted of three members, and a civil magistrate could be nominated as a member. The procedure laid down was that of the General Field Court Martial under the Army Act. All evidence, including defence, was to be written down in full. The death sentence had to be passed unanimously, and be confirmed by the General Officer Commanding. Records were to go to the Deputy Judge Advocate in Cape Town. Martial Law was to be enforced only in proclaimed areas, and all General Officers Commanding, brigadiers and commandants were given authority to administer it. Magistrates in the proclaimed districts were warned not to interfere in the work of the military, but the assurance was given that there was no intention to interfere in the ordinary work of civil administration.¹⁹⁰ Up to January 1900 fourteen cases under Martial Law appear to have been tried by Military Courts. The heaviest sentence was one of five years' penal servitude, commuted to two years' imprisonment with hard labour for High Treason and rebellion, and aiding and abetting the Boer forces in the destruction of the Modder River Bridge. A van Brunton was tried on 29 December 1899 at Modder River, and sentenced to three years' hard labour for intriguing with the enemy.¹⁹¹

The Orange Free State proclamation, originally issued by President MT Steyn on 15 October, was reissued by CJ Wessels as Commander of the Orange Free State forces and by other Boer leaders. It placed the whole of Griqualand West under Martial Law, citing the OFS Act 10 of 1899. Martial Law was to be enforced over the whole division, and was applicable to every action that could endanger the safety of the burghers. Under this act non-members of the British Army who took up arms against the forces of either republics could appear before a military Council, could be sentenced to death or could undergo imprisonment not exceeding fifteen years. This punishment was applicable to those who spied for the enemy or acted as guides and mislead the Boers, or killed, murdered or plundered the forces of the republics, their followers or servants. It also applied to those who destroyed bridges, damaged telegraph wires, heliograph apparatus or destroyed railway lines controlled by republican forces. They also announced a right to requisition goods. All those who refused to submit to the proclamation were to leave within fourteen days.¹⁹²

Great Britain had the sovereign right to proclaim Martial Law in the Cape Colony and Natal, but appeared powerless to enforce it in many parts of Bechuanaland and Griqualand West. In contrast the Orange Free State also enforced their Martial Law regulations on the colonists in the same area, although

¹⁹⁰ Amery (ed), *The Times History*, VI, pp544-57.

¹⁹¹ Amery (ed), *The Times History*, VI, p550; *Grocotts Daily Mail Weekly War Summary*, 3 January, 1900, 'A Traitor Punished'.

they had no sovereign right to do so. Here *de facto* as opposed to *de jure* conditions prevailed. The Free State proclamation implied that they had a legitimate right to govern a colonial town, and convinced those still wavering that their property would be safe if they joined the Boer forces. The replacement of local colonial Government by even the most basic *de facto* Republican Government gave the impression that civil administration would be ratified as soon as Boer victory was assured.

The Griqualand West rebellion

The Free State forces crossed the open frontier on 14 October 1899 and advanced on Kimberley. Their leaders had neither military experience nor the tactics to capture the diamond centre, but the Transvaal forces that followed were made of sterner stuff. Sweeping southwards they destroyed communications by partially demolishing bridges at both Fourteen Streams and Modder River. When G van der Merwe of Fauresmith occupied Belmont on 19 October, he had rebel recruits with him. Soon the railway line all the way to Mafeking was in Boer hands, but the vital bridge over the Orange River remained in British hands.¹⁹³

The news that Free State forces were crossing the border without opposition from the colonial forces so alarmed the Barkly West Magistrate L Harrison that he made a fruitless appeal for help to the Under Colonial Secretary, Lord Selbourne on 31 October 1899.¹⁹⁴

An invitation originating from Gen Joubert had been circulating among the Colonists in the Hay district. It called on "true brothers and fellow countrymen" to attend a meeting at Moosfontein as the Boer forces had appointed Kootjie van der Westhuizen to discuss "all good matters and people all had to arrive with a gun and ammunition and as much provisions as they could bring with them". Among the throng of curious people who went to Moosfontein was the concerned Magistrate, S Tilney, who had heard about the meeting on 1 November 1899. Here he met 40 local farmers. He told them that despite the invasion it was not their war and that they must return home and plough, and if they were obedient, they would be protected. He reported later that the farmers complained bitterly of being kept in the dark, and said that their government was not supplying any guidance despite the growing danger of hostilities. Tilney also

¹⁹² Breytenbach, *Die Geskiedenis van die Tweede Vryheidsoorlog*, I, pp479-480; Amery (ed), *The Times History*, II, p275; Amery, (ed), *The Times History*, VI, pp544 and 547.

¹⁹³ Amery (ed), *The Times History*, II, p273; AG Barlow, *Almost in Confidence*, p74.

¹⁹⁴ CAR, CCP 1/2/1/111, Occupation of the Cape Colony by Orange Free State forces, report L Harrison, 17 November 1899.

pointed to various conciliatory proclamations from the Prime Minister, but the farmers were very dissatisfied.¹⁹⁵

Most of the men (apparently all unarmed) dispersed after the Magistrate spoke. About fifteen stayed behind arguing over yet another letter that arrived from two Free State commandants warning them that they were all in danger. They were advised to cut the telegraph and declare war. Abraham Maritz of Steinbokhoorn said he objected and that cutting the wire was an act of rebellion. These colonists decided not to take up arms. But they speculated that if Kimberley was captured, they would be compelled to obey the Free Staters.¹⁹⁶

Gen CJ Wessels, Commander-in-Chief of Free State forces, declared Martial Law on 11 November 1899 in Griqualand West. A commando under Judge JB Hertzog and Cmdt JJ Jordaan, together with Landdrosts and Clerks, took possession of the villages one by one, ejected the local civil servants, gave loyalists fourteen days to leave and threatened non-members of the British army who took up arms with death or fifteen years imprisonment. The Orange Free State then appointed Justices of the Peace and Veld Cornets who systematically enrolled British subjects in republican forces.

At Barkly West on 11 November 1899, Magistrate Harrison was compelled to hand over buildings, stores and some cash. Wavering loyalists complained that as they had received no help from the Colonial Government, they joined the republicans to secure life and property.¹⁹⁷ Baart Van Aswegen of Grootfontein, Barkly West became the commandant of the Dronfield Laager.¹⁹⁸ Other important rebels were Johannes Hendrik Lamprecht of Kameelfontein, Johannes Hendrik Lubbe of Kramersfontein and Peter Christian Massyn of Danielskuil.¹⁹⁹

As the Free Staters entered the Herbert district the first act of the invading forces was to cut the telegraph, 'disorganise' the postal system and proclaim Martial Law. Escorted by a group of eager colonists, the Free Staters rode into Douglas on 15 November. A trader in Douglas complained that they were being left like 'rats in a trap' and asked why more was not done for the inhabitants.²⁰⁰

More colonial supporters welcomed the Free Staters at Griquatown in the Hay district two days later. The occupations commenced with the usual reassuring flag-raising ceremonies and the public reading of a proclamation stating that Griqualand West was now part of the Orange Free State. Colonial

¹⁹⁵ CAR, CCP 1/2/1/111, Occupation of the Cape Colony by Orange Free State forces, report of Assistant Magistrate S Tilney, 2 December 1899.

¹⁹⁶ CAR, AG 3407, Preliminary investigation into charges of High Treason of Hermanus Steyn, statement of A Maritz 30 August 1899.

¹⁹⁷ CAR, CCP 1/2/1/111 Occupation of the Cape Colony by Orange Free State forces, report of Magistrate Lancelot Harrison, 9 July 1900.

¹⁹⁸ CAR, AG 2016, Correspondence Anglo-Boer War and High Treason, Barkly West, 1900-1903, Part 2, Folio 48.

¹⁹⁹ CAR, AG 2117, Class 1 Rebel charged with High Treason under the Indemnity and Special Tribunals Act of 1900 during June 1901.

civil servants from magistrates to clerks were expelled after being compelled to hand over the village assets. Orange Free State officers appointed Justices of the Peace and Veld Cornets, and, with the aid of the Voters Rolls, enrolled British subjects into the Boer forces. The colonists were divided and confused and there was nobody to rally them to the flag, it was up to each individual to resist as best he could or flee the area. Two Dutch Veld Cornets who refused to join were treated harshly and sent to Pretoria where they were kept handcuffed for weeks.²⁰¹

JP van Niekerk of Griquatown telegraphed Milner and warned him that the Free State forces had occupied Griquatown. Milner replied a week later, telling Van Niekerk to stay loyal and promised that he would be compensated for his losses.²⁰² JJ van Broekhuizen from the Winburg Commando stated later that the Free State forces were invited to come into the Hay district by Ockert Jacobus van Rensburg (Griquatown), Frans Badenhorst, (Badenhorstfontein), Jan Christoffel Esterhuizen (Zaksdrift), Philip Snyman (Nek) and some others. Jacobus Andries Jooste of Matsap was elected commandant. All rebels bore arms with the Free Staters and Transvalers of their own free will, said Broekhuizen.²⁰³

Charles Pretorius Robus, the Field Cornet of Campbell, reported that a commando of Free Staters appeared and read a proclamation declaring Campbell Free State property. Hendrik Beukes welcomed them saying, "As Ruth said, your God is my god and your people my people".²⁰⁴ The republicans seized the magazine and the Free Staters distributed the ammunition, which had belonged to the Cape Police to their recruits. Marthinus Louwrens Lotter of Campbell, a blacksmith, described the scene in a poem *Een Gedicht op de Proklamering van Griqualand Wes*. They were all handed weapons in order to fight for the rights of the Transvaal, he wrote. The flag-raising ceremony and the reading of the proclamation had convinced these colonists that they were part of the republics, and that 'loyalists' were in the wrong.²⁰⁵

At Postmasburg Albertus Johannes Viljoen, who was acquainted with President Kruger, campaigned for the Boer cause.²⁰⁶ However when the commando reached the village the locals claimed

²⁰⁰ Lunderstedt (ed), *Summer of 1899*, Letter by W Luther Scarles, 21 October 1899 in *Diamond Fields Advertiser*.

²⁰¹ CAR, CCP 1/2/1/111, A94, Occupation of the Cape Colony by Orange Free State forces, Magistrate's report.

²⁰² *Conference of Loyalists*, p17.

²⁰³ CAR, AG 3407, Preliminary Investigation into charge of High Treason of SCJ Venter, statement of Broekhuizen, 17 September 1900.

²⁰⁴ CAR, AG 3407, Preliminary Investigation into charges of High Treason, Paul Johannes Venter, statement by Charles Pretorius Robus, 6 September 1901.

²⁰⁵ *Een ieder kreeg zijn wapen daar,
Om er mede te gaan vechten
Wij waren Slechts een kleine schaar
Maar vecht' voor d'Transvaal rechten.*

²⁰⁶ PHR Snyman, 'Postmasburg en die Tweede Vryheidsoorlog', *Military History Journal*, December, 1985, pp204-208; CAR, CCP 1/2/1/111, A94, Occupation of the Cape Colony by Orange Free State forces, Magistrate's report.

that the Free Staters offered them one shilling and sixpence a day to fight on the Boer side. If Hertzog and Jordaan offered to pay rebels, they didn't do it elsewhere, and neither did they offer to remit mortgages.²⁰⁷

Among the 2,000 rebels raised in Griqualand West, Petrus Jacobus de Villiers (Ou Hartjie) of Egmont, Herbert later promoted to General, became the foremost fighter.²⁰⁸ He was leader from a young age - at seventeen he was elected Field-Cornet of Kalkfontein Ward in Hope Town.²⁰⁹ Of the sixteen leading Herbert rebels the most important were Jacobus Johannes Ludiwicus Scholtz of Sunnyside, commandant of the Douglas rebels, Edward Minnaar Warden of Plooyberg and Christian Jacobus Nel of Douglas.²¹⁰

During November and December the Free State's Chief Magistrate, JJ Morgendal, controlled commandeering in Barkly West. He expelled 500 loyalists on 1 January 1900 as they had refused to pay £37-10-0 war tax or fight on the Boer side; they trekked to the British camp near Modder River as law and order broke down and the vacated farms were looted. The loyalists were sent down to Cape Town to refugee camps, which was only the beginning of that sad saga of civilian refugee camps.²¹¹

Black colonists, who were forcibly commandeered at gunpoint in December 1899 by Philip Snyman of Nek, included Smeer, Paul and Mattivis Bobeje of Carrinton, Hay. They were lodged in the Griquatown Gaol and then taken to the Boer Laager at Kareeputs in the Kimberley district. Smeer Bobeje remained in the laager for seven months, but Paul and Mattivis Bobeje, who were commandeered to look after horses, ran away about a month later. Jan Pofadder of Carrinton stated that when Snyman threatened to shoot him, he went to Bloemfontein with a wagon and returned with a load of meal and mealies, which he delivered to the Griquatown Gaol. He was then commandeered to shear SKJ Venter's sheep. In February 1900 he went to Christiana and returned with 120 cases of ammunition and four cases of guns.²¹² These four cases are documented, but other anecdotal accounts of unarmed blacks working as grooms, shepherds, wagoners and cook boys indicate that hundreds more black colonists could have been involved in the battlefield. Commandeered labour was not paid, scrounged for food and was a cheap resource.

Maj FWR Albrecht, OFS Artillery, commenced a sporadic bombardment of Kimberley on 6 November, but as the shells carried a low explosive charge, little damage was done. The Bloemhof

²⁰⁷ Snyman, 'Postmasburg en die Tweede Vryheidsoorlog', pp204-08.

²⁰⁸ Jaques Malan, *Die Boere-offisiere van die Tweede Vryheidsoorlog, 1899-1902*, p28; *Dictionary of South African Bibliography*, II, WJ de Kock (ed) (until 1970) and DW Kruger (ed) (since 1971), p222; CAR, AG 2029, Correspondence Anglo-Boer War and High Treason, Herbert, Folio 2, list of Class 1 rebels.

²⁰⁹ Malan, *Die Boere-offisiere*, p28; *Dictionary of SA Bibliography*, II, p222; CAR, AG 2029, Correspondence Anglo-Boer War and High Treason, Herbert, Folio 2, list of Class 1 rebels.

²¹⁰ See Chapter 5 Duties of a rebel *Veld Cornet*.

²¹¹ CAR, CCP 1/2/1/111, A94, Occupation of the Cape Colony by Orange Free State forces, Magistrate's report.

Commando occupied Carter's Ridge southeast of the town, and the Transvaal Artillery fired one of their guns from this position. When Gen Paul Methuen, in command of the First Division advancing towards Kimberley sent a message to Col Kekewich that he could arrive on 26 November, Kekewich ordered 800 mounted troops under Lieut-Col H Scott-Turner to drive the Boer forces from Carter's Ridge. The Boers reported that eleven men were killed, eighteen wounded and among the 33 captured was J de Wet of Frijersdal, Gordonia, but the Kimberley garrison did not capture the Boer Krupp gun. Scott-Turner's second attack on Carter's Ridge was a disaster, as he was killed and his force sustained heavy losses as they fell back.²¹³ Rebels Christoffel de la Rey of Doornfontein, Schalk Vorster of Warrenton and Gert Daniel Jacobus Scholtz of Mauritzfontein were killed in action although the exact date and place has not been established.²¹⁴

The British army under Methuen had advanced on 21 November from the Orange River with 8,000 men to relieve Kimberley. In three battles lasting more than five days, Boer forces clashed with the British at Belmont on 23 November, Graspan on 25 November and Modder River on 28 November. The Boer forces then entrenched themselves at Magersfontein, where they gained a notable victory on 11 December 1899.²¹⁵ The comment in the German Official account was that the battles had demonstrated the great difficulty of mounting pure frontal attacks in a flat region. While Methuen lacked mounted troops for reconnaissance the Boers were well fitted for fighting on the defensive.²¹⁶

During the war around Kimberley a number of colonists were commandeered into the Bloemfontein, Ladybrand and Boshoff Commandos. V/C JHL Bosman recruited at least 50 colonists in Barkly West. Colonists were also found in the Hoopstad Commando under J Greyling and in D Lubbe's, WC Steyn's and in H van der Reis's commandos.²¹⁷ The Boer forces failed to unleash an all-out attack on Kimberley, and German military observers called the siege a pretence and not a serious military enterprise.²¹⁸ The blockade stopped supplies getting through, but failed to cut off the town's water supply, as De Beers provided water from the Wesselton mine. Boer forces were gradually withdrawn from around Kimberley to the Modder River, although rebels under Baart van Aswegen of Grootfontein, Barkly West remained at Dronfield.²¹⁹

²¹² CAR, AG 3407, Preliminary Investigations into charges of High Treason by Philip Snyman, statements by three members of the Bobeje family and Jan Poffadder, 16 July 1900.

²¹³ Carver, Field Marshall Lord, *The National Army Museum Book of the Boer War*, p39.

²¹⁴ Amery (ed), *The Times History*, IV, p552-556; CAR, AG 2034, Folio 5, Correspondence Anglo-Boer War and High Treason, 1900-1903; Lunderstedt (ed), *The Summer of 1899*, p271.

²¹⁵ Amery (ed), *The Times History*, VII, London, p2.

²¹⁶ General Staff, Berlin, *German Official Account of the War in South Africa*, October 1899 to February 1900, p85.

²¹⁷ FAR, SO/POW list, lists of Cape Rebels up to 22 April 1900.

²¹⁸ Curson, *The History of the Kimberley Regiment*, p149; General Staff, Berlin, *The German Official Account of the War in South Africa*, October 1899 to February 1900, p148.

²¹⁹ Amery (ed), *The Times History*, II, p276; III, p412.

An unknown number of Cape rebels, possibly hundreds, fought on the republican side. The Boer record of the first four battles is mute about the part they played. It can be assumed that rebels were counted among the Boer forces, but probably like the blacks, were simply ignored. The historian Breytenbach overlooked the role of rebels during the battle of Belmont, in which De Villiers of Egmont, Herbert fought with such distinction that Gen De la Rey promoted him to Combat General in recognition of his services.²²⁰ A number of rebels in action have been traced through the arms issued to them: Daniel Jacobs, CJ/son of Belmont was armed with a Martini-Henry, Andries Goosen of Rooilaagte was armed with a Mauser and Johannes du Preez of Scholtznek, was armed with a ZAR rifle. Jan Christian Lubbe of Blackheath and Barend Uys, same address, got leave from Gen Cronjé after they had taken part in the fights of Belmont, Scholtz Nek and Magersfontein.²²¹ Petrus Snyders of Barkly West, Christian Johannes van der Westhuizen and Johannes Christian Venter of Hay were captured at Modder River; Hendrik Boshof of Hay was killed, possibly at Magersfontein.²²²

Wars are a system of logistics and supply. Invading a state and planning that the occupied country would automatically provide the commissariat for the troops, fails because the army displaces the civilian population with too great a concentration of men. Successful soldiering is dependant on sufficient food supplies.²²³ Griqualand West's economy was stripped to supply huge concentrations of Boer soldiers, and by January 1900 the large mounted Boer force at Magersfontein had completely overgrazed the veld. Frans Conradie's account described the dust clouds, the almost unbearable heat and the thousands of large stock struggling to survive.²²⁴

Jack Lane, an Irish-born Transvaal burgher and *Magazijn Meester* in Cronjé's laager, referred to incidents of loyal farmers being brought to the laager *en route* to Bloemfontein Gaol. He wrote prophetically that he was afraid the Griqualand West rebel would get into trouble after the war. "The British will go for them as rebels. A great many were compelled to join..... a Boer commando comes to your farm... if you join, so far all well, your wife, your family, all are respected. But if you refuse you are roughly treated. The first thing is a rifle in your ear... everything is taken and your wife and family are left to starve... so you join and the end is confiscation and punishment".²²⁵ By May 1900 about 100 colonists from the Cape and Natal were in gaol in Pretoria for refusing to fight for the republicans. British

²²⁰ Malan, *Die Boere-offisiere*, p28; Kruger and Beyers (eds), *Dictionary of South African Biography*, III, p228.

²²¹ CAR, AG 2127, Affidavits, Herbert, Folios 552 and 556, Statements by SB van Niekerk.

²²² FAR, SO/POW list, List of Transvaal Prisoners of War; WH Ackerman, *Opsaal. Herinneringe aan die Tweede Vryheidsoorlog*, p340; National Monuments Commission states that Boshof, was buried at Griquaastad and reinterred at Magersfontein in 1969.

²²³ Keegan, *A History of Warfare*, p301.

²²⁴ Francois D Conradie, *Met Cronjé aan die Wesfront (1899-1900) en Waarom het die Boere die Oorlog Verloor?*, p89.

²²⁵ William Lane (ed), *The War Diary of Burgher Jack Lane 1899-1900*, Van Riebeeck Society, II-32, pp68-69.

forces released an unknown number of colonial loyalists, held in the Bloemfontein Gaol, in March 1900.²²⁶

New Year 1900 started with a debacle for the Herbert rebels. Friends and relatives were visiting the laager at Sunnyside, 40 miles (64 kms) northwest of Douglas, when a guard noticed that a span of oxen approaching the camp were pulling a gun. Col TD Pilcher, who had taken command of the Belmont camp the week before attacked the laager with a flying column of 700 men, including Australians and 100 Canadians from a Toronto company. In less than an hour most of the rebels fled after six were killed, twelve wounded and 34 captured. The column then destroyed commandeered stores, collected arms and ammunition from Douglas and returned to Belmont. Marthinus Lotter said they were 60 rebels against 1,400 troops, and one of the local men, Jacobus J Cloete died from a heart attack attempting to escape. The affair was the first success for the British after the defeat at Magersfontein, and the first occasion the Canadian troops were in action in South Africa.²²⁷ The Douglas rebels were later found guilty of High Treason in the Cape Supreme Court on 23 April 1900. Of 37 rebels traced, the Court convicted three to five-year terms of imprisonment; 21 rebels were gaoled for three years, and the rest received sentences ranging from two years to six months.²²⁸ The convicted men were transferred to the Tokai Convict Station near Cape Town in November 1900.²²⁹

After the skirmish the Boer forces formed a new laager at Zulani with Theunis Hotzhausen as commandant. The rebels who fled were ordered to rejoin, and those that refused were forced back into the laager.²³⁰ Cmdt Scholtz of Douglas regrouped his men and moved to the left bank of the Modder River where they joined Gen Christian de Wet's force. It was an uneasy existence as the Free Staters, Transvalers and Griqualanders were irritated with each other and failed to integrate. De Wet ordered Scholtz to patrol between the Koedoesberg and the Swartrand, a terrain neglected by Gen Cronjé. The Scouts reported to Cronjé that a large British force was advancing along the Riet River in the direction of the Koedoesberg on 3 February. Cronjé dismissed them saying they were to catch the warthogs (presumably a derogatory description of the British troops) and to bring them to his laager.²³¹ De Wet, with only 350 men at his disposal, attempted without success to dislodge the British who were soon strongly entrenched. Lotter at Koedoesberg, wrote in *Groot Gevecht Bij de Koppie* that after Jan Hendrik

²²⁶ *Mafeking Mail, Special Siege Slips*, 'In Pretoria Gaol – Mr Hellowell's Narrative', 19 April 1900.

²²⁷ Carman Miller, *Painting the Map Red, Canada and the South African War, 1899-1902*, Paperback edition, pp79-81; Brian A Reid, *Our Little Army in the Field, the Canadians in South Africa 1899-1902*, pp49-53; ML Lotter, *Uit de Oorlog – Gedichten over Gevechten in Grikwaland West enz en Namen van Gevangenen te Tokai*, 'Een gedicht van 't Gevecht Te Sunnyside.

²²⁸ CAR, AG 2117, Lists of persons convicted of High Treason under Act 6 of 1900, tried in the Cape Supreme Court, sentenced 23 April 1900.

²²⁹ CAR, TOK 2/16, Register of Prisoners at Tokai Prison, November 1900 to March 1903.

²³⁰ CAR, AG 3405, Preliminary Investigation of High Treason into Class 1 Rebels of Herbert.

Combrink and Frans de Jongh of Middelplaats, Kimberley were killed, some of the burghers fled at a critical moment and leaving only 25 men to defend the position.²³²

Scholtz, who had been ordered to fetch ammunition, returned to De Wet's camp with 200 rebels on 7 February, only to find the burghers were ignoring the British cavalry in the vicinity and the Free Staters and some rebels were accusing the Transvalers of cowardice. De Wet even warned them that if they left their positions again they could be shot. Discipline had collapsed totally, and the rebels at Kalbasdrift then looted a house and store and then quarrelled further over who owned a herd of cows.²³³ Luckily the cavalry pulled back from Koedoesberg, which was a feint, to distract attention from their strategy of breaking through at Ramdam.²³⁴

On 12 February Scholtz, with 200 Griqualand rebels and some burghers, and armed only with a gun was ordered to advance through Jacobsdal and occupy the hills on the left bank of the Riet River in an attempt to halt the British advance through Watervaldrift. From their position they stared with disbelief at a force of cavalry totaling 5,000, plus seven batteries, riding with impunity to relieve Kimberley. When the small commando was sighted, French diverted some of his men, who drove the Boers back to Jacobsdal. Conradie complained that had De Wet been able to deploy 1,000 men with three or four guns, they would have had a chance, at least to defend the drifts. As it was half of Scholtz's men fled. They were now paying the price for Cronjé's obstinacy.²³⁵ Lotter's verses give a glimpse of how Piet de Villiers kept his head in the shock and confusion. A loose translation reads: "De Villiers who was by my side said to me that this strong force will outflank us and we can't stay here. So we retreated to our horses".²³⁶

The Douglas rebels later fell back to Zulani laager, and then joined the retreating Vryburg and Kuruman rebels under V/C Visser, who, using the route through Schmidtsdrift, retreated to Fourteen Streams as the British forces swept forward.²³⁷ The Long Tom gun that had shelled Kimberley for a week

²³¹ Conradie, *Met Cronjé aan die Wesfront*, pp95-96.

²³² CAR, AG 2034, Folio 5, Correspondence, Anglo Boer War and High Treason, Kimberley, 1900-1903; Lotter, *Uit de Oorlog*, p10.

²³³ Conradie, *Met Cronjé aan die Wesfront*, pp 95-96; Lotter, *Uit de Oorlog*, Een gedigt van het gevecht te Koedoesberg, 1902, p8.

²³⁴ Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, *The Great Boer War*, p308.

²³⁵ Conradie, *Met Cronjé aan die Wesfront*, pp127-128.

²³⁶ Lotter, *Uit de Oorlog*, Terug naar onze paarden, p13. It reads,

*De Villiers zeide toen aan mij,
Want hij was steeds nog aan mijn zij;
Die grote mach zal om ons gaan,
Wij kunnen niet voor hen bestaan,
Wij zijn dan ook met eens gegaan,
Naar d' plats waar onze paarden staan.*

²³⁷ CAR, AG 2037, Correspondence Anglo-Boer War and High Treason, Kuruman 1900-1904, Document re Langeberg rebels, 16 December, 1900; Lotter, *Uit de Oorlog*, Twede Dag, Nu Naar de Berg, p15.

fired its last shell on 15 February 1900, the day the siege was relieved by Gen French. In the chaos of retreat the Boer forces could not find a team of oxen to pull the gun, and the Warrenton rebels spanned themselves into the traces and pulled the Long Tom until a team of oxen was found and inspanned, and it trundled away to the north.

Bart van Aswegen was later praised as a 'stout-hearted rebel' when he did not retreat, but held the laager at Dronfield and fought off the guns from three batteries. Van Aswegen kept up such a rapid fire that French ordered his men to pull back. Twelve rebels were captured and the remainder were forced to abandon the Krupp gun, but slipped away in a dust storm. Three rebels J Bester, WH Kruger and HJ van Zyl were killed two days later in a sharp fight around Felstead's Kopje.²³⁸

Cronjé retreated from the exposed Magersfontein to Paardeberg in the Free State where he was bombarded into submission and surrendered on 27 February 1900 with 4,105 persons of which 3,955 were republicans.²³⁹ Among the men that surrendered were about 124 colonists; while 84 of these admitted that they were British citizens, at least 40 others gave false addresses for fear of reprisals.²⁴⁰ Despite the massive defeat and lost morale of the Boer forces, the Griqualand West rebels would not begin laying down arms until May and June 1900 when Vryburg and Mafeking were back in British hands.

Rebellion south of the Orange River

South of the Orange River the Colonial Burgher Force of each division had been an integral part of village life, and its commandants were influential men. Cmdt Petrus Steenekamp of Albert had been appointed Field Cornet in 1886, and, according to Sir Henry de Villiers, thanks to him there was almost no crime in the Burghersdorp/Molteno area.²⁴¹ Cmdt Gustav van Aardt of the Aliwal North commando, presented a loyal address from the Dutch farmers to Sir Alfred Milner in 1898, and as late as July 1899 organized a parade of 150 mounted men, with 200 on foot, through Aliwal North to celebrate Queen Victoria's 80th birthday.²⁴² Probably Cmdt Christoffel Myburgh of Barkly East and the leaders of the Dordrecht Commando and the Colesberg Mounted Rifle Club held similar parades for the Queen's birthday.

²³⁸ Amery (ed), *The Times History*, III, p412; Breytenbach, *Die Geskiedenis van die Tweede Vryheidsoorlog*, IV, p228; Lunderstedt (ed), *The Summer of 1899*, p271.

²³⁹ Amery (ed), *The Times History*, III, p484.

²⁴⁰ FAR, SO/POW list, Prisoners of War at Cape Town and Natal; CAR, AG 3558, Register of Rebels who are POWs; CAR, AG 2117, Lists of persons convicted of High Treason under Act 6 of 1900, 1903.

²⁴¹ Johannes Meintjes, *Stormberg a Lost Opportunity*, p134.

²⁴² *Midland News*, 27 July 1899, 'Aliwal North Burghers Parade'.

The good relationships between border towns and the Colonial Government soured when the news spread that Schreiner had allowed arms and ammunition passage to the Free State.²⁴³ The border of the Orange River was not defended except for a small number of Cape Police at Norvalspont, Bethulie and Aliwal North, who were normally deployed doing their usual duties.²⁴⁴ Once the republican forces invaded Griqualand West in October the news that half a battalion of the 2nd Berkshires had been deployed at Stormberg and Naauwpoort was reassuring, as the inhabitants of the border districts felt vulnerable. G Steevens, a correspondent who had visited Aliwal North on 15 October, commented that its position was quite humiliating as the townspeople on the Orange River were unprotected.²⁴⁵

When Gen Sir Redvers Buller, newly appointed commander of the Army Corps in South Africa, arrived in Cape Town on 31 October 1899 and servicemen started disembarking, the public expected more troops to be sent to the Orange River. Instead because Kimberley, Mafeking and Ladysmith were all besieged and fearing another disaster, he ordered the Stormberg and Naauwpoort garrisons to pull back to Queenstown on 3 November, leaving only De Aar railway junction under guard by British forces.²⁴⁶ German military observers condemned the action as premature and disastrous as it cut off all communication between the eastern and western sections of the Cape Colony.²⁴⁷

The rebellion south of the Orange River actually began with an escalating series of protest meetings on the state of the government by discontented local leaders, ironically all members of the Afrikaner Bond. David Nicolas de Wet of Buffelsvlei, retired MLA for Aliwal North, Johannes Breed of Broedersbank and local Commandant Gustav van Aardt and even the Mayor, Nicolas Everhardus Smuts, boiled with indignation at the dilatoriness of their government who were ignoring Aliwal North's vulnerable position on the border with the Orange Free State. Once war was declared there were fears that Schreiner about to abdicate power on this frontier as well, confidence fell and businessmen began to leave the district.²⁴⁸

Aliwal North's position deteriorated further when arms and ammunition, held in the local magazine, were moved to Stormberg Junction. On 20 October 1899 when the troops were withdrawn to Queenstown this ordnance went with them.²⁴⁹ Next proclamations signed by Schreiner and Milner, appeared at the Magistrate's Courts ordering all colonists to abstain from acts against Her Majesty, that they were not to enlist or engage in Military services, nor to aid and abet; those who contravened the law

²⁴³ FJ du Plooy, *Aliwal Noord Eenhonderd Jaar*, I, p106; CAR, AG 3389 Statement by A C van Reenen, Magistrate's Clerk, April 1900.

²⁴⁴ CAR, AG 2069a, Instructions to Civil Commissioners and Cape Police, 1899.

²⁴⁵ G Steevens, *From Cape Town to Ladysmith*, p30.

²⁴⁶ Amery (ed), *The Times History*, II, p280.

²⁴⁷ General Staff, Berlin, *German Official Account of the War in South Africa*, October 1899 to February 1900 p127.

²⁴⁸ Steevens, *From Cape Town to Ladysmith*, p30.

²⁴⁹ CAR, AG 3389, Statement by Assistant Magistrate, AC Van Renen, April 1900.

would be prosecuted and convicted. The Prime Minister, stating he did not doubt they were loyal subjects, sent similar telegrams to all Field Cornets, Ministers of Religion, and Magistrates.²⁵⁰ The Prime Minister's telegrams and proclamations aroused anger among colonists generally who said proclamations must be backed by force.²⁵¹ The townspeople sent a resolution to the government in Cape Town "regarding with contempt the insinuation of disloyalty against colonists of Dutch decent; considering such charges not only insulting but calculated to increase the rupture that existed and enlarge hostilities in the country".²⁵² A rumour then spread that each district's Burgher Force would be called out to protect the district and Aliwal North's G van Aardt would lead the local defence. In Albert Piet Steenekamp would lead the Burgher Force.

Meanwhile a Free State force of 2,500 under Gen Elias Grobler of Philippolis, Cmdts Johannes Hendrik Olivier of Rouxville, Hans Swanepoel of Smithfield and FJ du Plooy of the Bethulie Commando remained camped north of the Orange River in the vicinity of Aliwal North, Bethulie and Norvalspont.²⁵³ Olivier entertained Aliwal North's leading men lavishly, including Nicholas Smuts, Nicholas Bekker of Vlakfontein, all members of the Town Council, and leading farmers such as Pieter Jacobus (Blou Oog) de Wet of Oorlogsfontein and Pieter Wouter de Wet of Wyngaardt, many of whom were friends and relatives.²⁵⁴ Dr P Luttig of Aliwal North described the men in laager under Olivier as "a jolly lot who were all doing nothing while their horses were fat and rested. The farmer's wives were sending good things to eat and drink to the laager".²⁵⁵ The Cape Police stationed on the Frere Bridge had ordered the local leaders not to cross the bridge, but they ignored them and visited the Free State commando.²⁵⁶

A tense situation developed, but it was all talk until the Magistrate, J Hugo, posted up "An important notice to all colonial burghers" at the Magistrate's Court on 11 November 1899. It read "An impression has got abroad that it is the intention to call out the colonial burghers in the field, that is not the case. The Imperial Forces will be quite adequate to meet all requirements".²⁵⁷ Van Aardt and the local forces lost face and the colonists were left in the lurch. The pro-Boer section of Aliwal North was ripe for

²⁵⁰ CAR, Cape of Good Hope, *Government Gazette*, No 277, 1899, 27 October 1899; *Oudtshoorn Courant*, 12 October 1899.

²⁵¹ *Grocott's Daily Mail Weekly War Summary*, 18 November 1899.

²⁵² *Grocott's Daily Mail Weekly War Summary*, 4 November 1899, 'Meeting of Aliwal North Dutchmen'.

²⁵³ Malan, *Die Boere-offisiere*, Schoeman, p51, (veteran of 1881), Olivier, p48, Swanepoel, p130 and Du Plooy, p82 (veterans of Basuto wars of 1865), Grobler, p33 (no previous military experience).

²⁵⁴ *The Colesberg Advertiser*, 12 April, 1900; P Luttig, 'Mediese Loopbaan van Dr Pieter Christoffel Luttig (1896-1938)', Dictated to his family in 1945 when he was blind, Fransie Pienaar Museum, Prince Albert, p10; CAR, AG 2062, Correspondence Anglo-Boer War and High Treason, Miscellaneous, Return of Investigation on charges of High Treason, Albert, June, 1903; Du Plooy, *Aliwal Noord, Een honderd Jaar*, I, p106.

²⁵⁵ Luttig, 'Mediese Loopbaan van Dr P Luttig', p11.

²⁵⁶ CAR, AG 3389, Preliminary investigation into charges of High Treason, Dawid N de Wet, April 1900.

²⁵⁷ *Grocott's Daily Mail Weekly War Summary*, 11 November 1899, 'Important Notice to Colonial Burghers'.

rebellion. Camus described rebellion as "action without planned issue, a spontaneous protestation... he rebels because he refuses to submit to conditions he considers intolerable".²⁵⁸

Historians have puzzled over why the Free State forces delayed a month before invading the Cape Colony. Breytenbach said that Grobler was nervous of a surprise attack from the south, and Scholtz dismissed the delay as inexplicable. Had the colonists been hardened revolutionaries they would have joined the Boer forces when war broke out. But the colonists were spurned and angry.²⁵⁹

President MT Steyn issued a proclamation on 14 October 1899 informing the colonists that as the Cape Colony was being used as a base for operations against the Free State, he had ordered his officers to cross the border in defence of the Free State and in order to maintain their independence. The Free State was not waging war against the burghers of the Cape Colony, he assured. They were waging war against the soldiers of Great Britain. Therefore colonists would enjoy perfect liberty of person and property so long as they were not hostile to the Orange Free State forces. Steyn also assured Schreiner that he was commandeering colonists as a safety measure to keep order in the occupied districts against a possible invasion by blacks armed by Imperial forces.²⁶⁰ Steyn ignored the issue that it was the Free Staters who were invading a sovereign state, and that British troops were duty bound to drive them back and invade the Free State in return.

Schreiner was finally shaken out of his inertia when the Free State forces invaded the Cape Colony proper a month after Kimberley had been invested. He protested that Steyn had annexed colonial territory, and he objected to the commandeering of colonists on pain of confiscation of their goods, and the exiling of civil servants and the public from their homes. He reproached Steyn, saying he could not believe that he, as President, approved of the actions of his commandos. He did not think the colonists deserved such treatment. People were being led into ill-considered actions for which they might have to pay heavily. The fault would lie with Steyn if he did not bring the matter to an end.²⁶¹ Steyn was not the least penitent, and fussed that Schreiner had used the word 'annexation' when he, Steyn, had used the word 'occupation' in his proclamation. However as 'annexation' means 'incorporation' or 'addition', and 'occupation' means 'invasion', 'capture' or 'seizure', this semantic dispute might have significance for a pair of lawyers but the reality was that once the Free State forces invaded the Cape Colony proper there was no going back.

This splutter of words was Schreiner's swansong as a military commander. From the moment the army corps arrived and after Lord Roberts took command on 10 January 1900 he faded into

²⁵⁸ Albert Camus, *The Rebel*, Penguin edition, pp 8,19.

²⁵⁹ Scholtz, *Waarom die Boere die oorlog verloor het*, p59; Breytenbach, *Die Geskiedenis van die Tweede Vryheidsoorlog*, I, p443.

²⁶⁰ CAR, CO 48/543, Steyn to Schreiner, 20 November 1899.

insignificance. According to Sir David Harris, Schreiner had placed too much reliance on the promises of his relatives and was left in the lurch and deceived. With his legal mind he thought of applying to the High Court for an injunction to restrain the Boers from advancing into colonial territory. His theory was rudely shattered.²⁶² But Schreiner, always right, shifted the blame onto the Imperial forces for not taking 'effective measures', and would say sorrowfully there was "no opportunity of establishing a special defence at every post along the frontier".²⁶³ But the two months debacle he created on the frontier would not easily be undone.

There was a festive air when the Rouxville Commando, led by Cmdt Olivier, crossed the Frere Bridge at Aliwal North on 13 November 1899. The nervous Olivier insisted that Magistrate Hugo and his clerk, Van Renen remain on the bridge to ensure that it wouldn't detonate under them. Prominent local men, including David de Wet, rode into Aliwal North as escorts to the Free Staters.²⁶⁴ Olivier led a commando of 500 Free Staters, wagons loaded with arms and ammunition plus two nine-pound Krupp guns into the town square and read a proclamation proclaiming Aliwal North part of the Orange Free State. Olivier said he was invited by the people of the northeast to enter Aliwal North, and renamed the place Oliviersfontein.²⁶⁵ Both the Free State flag and the *Vierkleur* were raised before an excited crowd. The Free Staters had persuaded the leading disaffected Dutch colonists to join them, arguing that they would all be in Cape Town long before the British could arrive in any numbers. But they dallied too long over the river; three days later Lieut-Gen Sir William Gatacre disembarked at East London, arriving in Queenstown on 16 November 1899. Crowded troops trains followed with contingents of Kaffrarian Rifles under E Brabant and two companies of Cape Mounted Riflemen who commenced patrolling from Penhoek.²⁶⁶

The occupation of Aliwal North by the Free State forces went smoothly. The Magistrate and other civil servants left according to instructions and the administration changed over. Nicholas de Lange of Dwarsvlei said David de Wet then addressed a meeting in the Court House, saying their Government had abandoned them and they had now joined the Free State.²⁶⁷ The Municipal Council was disbanded, but virtually the same people then took over the *Dorpsbestuur*. Nicholas Smuts became the

²⁶¹ CAR, CO 48/543, Schreiner to Steyn, 17 November 1899.

²⁶² D Harris, *Pioneer Soldier and Politician*, p156.

²⁶³ CAR, AG 2013, Correspondence Anglo-Boer War and High Treason, Barkly East 1899-1901, Schreiner to Magistrate, 21-11-1899; Cape of Good Hope, *Debates of the House of Assembly*, 1900, 3rd Session, July, 1900, The Defence of Vryburg.

²⁶⁴ Du Plooy, *Aliwal Noord, Een hondred Jaar*, I, p108.

²⁶⁵ CAR, CCP 1/2/1/111, A94, Occupation of the Cape Colony by Orange Free State forces, Magistrate's report; AV Oosthuizen, *Rebelle van die Stormberge – Tweede Vryheidsoorlog 1899-1902*, p49.

²⁶⁶ Williams, *The Record of the Cape Mounted Riflemen*, p61.

²⁶⁷ CAR, AG 3389, Preliminary investigation into charges of High Treason of Dawid Nicolas de Wet, April 1900 by Nicolaas de Lange of Dwarsvlei.

Burgermeester and with Nicolaas Bekker of Sonskyn, Jacobus S de Wet of Vaalkop and Philip Wege guarded the ammunition stored in the Courthouse.²⁶⁸ Johannes Christoffel Joubert of Olievenfontein, Stephanus Naude of Kalkoenkraal and Andries J Fourie of Lemoenkloof, former Field Cornets, kept their positions under the new administration.²⁶⁹

About 44 leading farmers in Aliwal North led the rebellion that was mainly driven by the De Wet, Joubert and Naude families. While David de Wet remained at Buffelsvlei, Piet de Wet of Oorlogsfontein and Pieter Wouter de Wet or 'Bolander' with Johannes Christoffel Joubert of Olievenfontein and former Field Cornets Gideon David Joubert of Patrysfontein and Pieter Johannes Naude of Naudesfontein became the organizers of the rebellion. These leaders organized; commandeered and provided recruits; they also supplied provisions and bought stock for the Boers, received arms and ammunition and generally took orders from the Free Staters. The most important military position of rebel commandant went to Gustav van Aardt who was furious about his treatment under the Colonial Government. The election was held with Andries Jacobus Wagenaar of Vischgat, who was acting Landdrost of Jamestown, in the chair. The unsuccessful candidates were Jacob Venter of Witkop and Johannes Hendrik Lubbe, senior, of Driefontein.²⁷⁰

Once Olivier controlled Aliwal North he permitted the English-speakers to leave or sign oaths of neutrality, but insisted that all Cape Dutch had become Free State burghers, and commandeered every white man between sixteen and 60 years as well as numbers of black voters. He had never warned the Dutch colonists they were going to be commandeered into the Free State forces.²⁷¹ Now they discovered that if they protested they were threatened with fines of £37-10-0 and banishment to Delagoa Bay.²⁷²

The compulsory commandeering was resented, although few opposed it as colonists realised that sympathy with the Boer cause had forced them into armed insurrection. Fervour for the Free State cause cooled. A pattern developed that men would return home and would have to be repeatedly commandeered and forced back to the laager. An example was the case of Nicolaas Herbst of Marshallskraal, who stated he was commandeered under Free State Martial Law by Nicolaas J Steyn of Groenfontein to appear at Aliwal North in 24 hours, failing that the law would deal with him. He and three brothers-in-law went to a rise near the racecourse and Martini-Henrys were issued to a couple of hundred men by the Free Staters.

²⁶⁸ CAR, AG 3388, Preliminary Investigation into Charges of High Treason of JS de Wet, statement by RS Dawe, 26 May 1900.

²⁶⁹ CAR, AG 2062, Correspondence Anglo-Boer War and High Treason, Miscellaneous, Return of Investigation on charges of High Treason, Aliwal North.

²⁷⁰ CAR, AG 3389, Preliminary investigations into charges of High Treason, statement by PW Labuschagne of Dankfontein, 20 April 1900.

²⁷¹ *The Colesberg Advertiser*, 15 November, 1899; CAR, CCP 1/2/1/111, A94, Occupation of the Cape Colony by Orange Free State forces, Magistrate's report.

²⁷² CAR, AG 3389, Annexure C 482, statements made to Maj Hook, 9 March 1900.

Herbst deserted after accompanying the commando to Jamestown. He handed in a medical certificate and returned home. Cmdt Gustav van Aardt commandeered him at the end of January and forced him to go to Stormberg, but as soon as he could he deserted and returned to the farm.²⁷³

While there was a hard core of keen people who believed in the Afrikaner cause, the rank and file was uncertain from the start, especially as rumours spread that trainloads of Khakis or Tommies were pouring into Queenstown. When Andries Fourie of Lemoenkloof, Lady Grey was elected Veld Cornet, he addressed the recruits²⁷⁴ and said while they were all aware the English troops were massing at Boesmanshoek and Penhoek near Queenstown, but they were not to be afraid.²⁷⁵

Cmdt Hans Swanepoel of Smithfield and 300 Free Staters occupied Burghersdorp on 15 November 1899. As armed burghers patrolled the streets, and 300 or 400 others lined the *koppes* of the town the Magistrate, JG Gie, protested when Swanepoel announced that the Albert division was annexed by the Free State. He was informed that the proclamation had only to be read in public once for it to be law. Commandeering of the Dutch colonists began; while some joined willingly other anxious Dutch colonists tried to establish if the proclamation was an official act carried out with President Steyn's permission, and many older farmers refused to hand over money or sheep on demand and returned home. Professor Jan Lion-Cachet, at the Seminary, warned them of the dire consequence of rebellion, as did the Rev James Ross at Lady Grey.²⁷⁶ About 25 farmers led the rebellion in this district, but it did not take as much of a hold in the birthplace of the Afrikaner Bond as had been expected, even though Albert was the largest division in the Northern Cape, consisting of Burghersdorp, Venterstad, Steynsburg and Molteno. The leaders of the Albert rebels were Hendrik Bernadus Kruger of Ezelshoek, Venterstad and Johannes Zacharias Pansegrouw, an influential man in Burghersdorp, who were members of the war council. Abel Oosthuizen of Berseba, Steynsburg was the leader of that area, and Cmdt Piet Steenkamp, who had been the head of the Burger force, now became military leader under the Free Staters. How much influence he had on Olivier is unknown. The tasks of the war council were the same as in other districts: to recruit, to arm, to commandeer and to collect provisions. Gie estimated that the Free State forces commandeered half the Dutch voters and two thirds of the non-voters, but that many wealthy men left the district with their stock for Queenstown rather than allow their sons to take up arms.²⁷⁷

²⁷³ CAR, AG 3388, Preliminary Investigations into charge of High Treason, Nicolas J Steyn of Groenfontein, statement by Nicolas Francois Herbst 28 June 1900.

²⁷⁴ CAR, AG 3389, Preliminary investigation into charges of High Treason, statement by JN de Lange, 18 April 1900.

²⁷⁵ See Chapter 5, Life on commando.

²⁷⁶ Oosthuizen, *Rebelle van die Stormberge*, pp56 & 61.

²⁷⁷ Cory Library, Ms 10.581, Letter by May Johnson, 26 November 1899 to 7 March 1900; CAR, AG 3387, Preliminary Investigations into charges of High Treason, Albert District; CAR, AG 2008, Albert, Correspondence Anglo Boer War and High Treason 1900-1904.

Jotham Joubert, MLA for Albert for twenty years, joined the rebellion and was made Veld Cornet, to the shock of his colleagues in the Cape Parliament.²⁷⁸ It split the family as Jotham's son, Gideon Joubert of Rietfontein, asked Cmdt Swanepoel if he could swear an oath of neutrality, but was told that was for Englishmen only. He was allowed to go home, but was commandeered a month later and informed if he refused he would be put over the border and all his stock would be commandeered. He asked for leave to gather his crops and went to the laager unwillingly and surrendered at Steynsburg at the first opportunity.²⁷⁹

At Lady Grey CP van der Merwe, the Field Cornet, his assistant Andries de Wet and Christoffel Petrus Hendricus Myburgh of Karmelkspruit, Lady Grey, formerly head of the colonial Burgher force, pasted copies of the Free State proclamation on walls.²⁸⁰ Rebels demanded arms and ammunition from the magistrates at Lady Grey and Venterstad, and one of them threatened to shoot Assistant Magistrate, Frank Geddy. Geddy tried to read a loyal proclamation but was ignored. The Magistrate, J Smellerkamp, was forced to hand over rifles and 600 cartridges to the Veld Cornet of Bethulie and was told to leave Venterstad on 21 November 1899. Clerks and loyalists were given seven days to leave for Queenstown. Molteno district was the only division in Albert, that was not mentioned when Swanepoel proclaimed the division Free State territory as it was a loyalist stronghold. The Magistrate of Molteno, JCP du Toit, stood firm and circulated notices that commandeering was not permitted in the Molteno district. It was then proclaimed a division, and during the first invasion few men joined the republicans from there.²⁸¹ When the Free Staters occupied Albert, the leading loyalists, the Strettons and the Brosters, trekked with their stock to Queenstown.²⁸²

Barkly East's leanings towards the republics had been an open secret for months. In this mountainous district of about 285 small farms, on the edge of the Drakensberg the influence of a former Magistrate, George Munnik, remained strong. He was now *Landdrost* of Boksburg and was in continuous correspondence with the townspeople. He had told Kruger months before war broke out that he could count on a friend who would come from the Colony with 300 men to help.²⁸³ The avuncular Munnik was an excellent recruiter, and Jan Hendrik Jacobus Greyventein of Bosch Hoek was among those who

²⁷⁸ Chris Venter, 'Jotham Joubert: Profiel van 'n Kaapse Rebel' in *Tydskrif vir Geesteswetenskappe*, 1999, 39 (3/4), p67; Johnson, May, letter from at Burghersdorp 18 November 1899 to 7 March 1899, Cory Library, MS 10.581..

²⁷⁹ CAR, AG 2008, Correspondence Anglo-Boer War and High Treason, Albert 1900-1904, Part 2, Folio 40, Statement by G Joubert, 29 May 1900; Cory Library, Ms 10.581, Letter by May Johnson between 26 November 1899 and 7 March 1900.

²⁸⁰ Oosthuizen, *Rebelle van die Stormberge*, p60.

²⁸¹ CAR, CCP 1/2/1/111, A94, Occupation of the Cape Colony by Orange Free State forces, Magistrate's report.

²⁸² Johannes Meintjes, *Dorp van Drome: Die Geskiedenis van Molteno 1874-1974*, pp88-89; *Grocott's Daily Mail Weekly War Summary*, 11 November 1899.

²⁸³ GG Munnik, *The Memoirs of Senator the Honourable GG Munnik*, p164.

explained later that they rebelled because their old Magistrate had asked them to join as the British did not have a chance.²⁸⁴

The leaders of the rebellion were Jan de Wet of Mosheshsford, a cousin of Christian de Wet, Carl van Pletzen of Cloverley, Hermanus Jacobus Potgieter of Lyonesse and Johannes Coenraad Dormehl of Benmore. They confronted the Magistrate on 10 November and accused him of despatching 450 rifles and about 80,000 rounds of ammunition stored in the magazine to Herschel to arm the Basuto. Dormehl said that the Basuto chief Mollezi had threatened that he would fight the Boers, and this boast would be their chance to capture the ordnance and then they could not be charged with rebellion. The Magistrate, DA Campbell, complained to Schreiner saying he did not intend to submit to the farmers. It was degrading for officials to remain quiet while rebel Dutchmen could do all they liked. It was his duty to report the matter to the High Commissioner, he said. Schreiner then reproved Campbell, and told him to show forbearance and not to lose his head and neither was he to contact Milner. Schreiner asked Merriman to contact Van Pletzen, Potgieter, De Wet and others on 21 October and requested them to keep the people quiet, as the greatest harm could be done with anything that could be construed as sedition. The conspirator wrote back blandly three days later saying there was no sedition among the farming population.²⁸⁵

Olivier had already occupied Aliwal North when the police in King William's Town and the Secretary to the Law Department discovered the extent of the ordnance in the Barkly East magazine. Campbell asked for police protection and the local sub-inspector requested extra men to guard the arms and ammunition.²⁸⁶ On 15 November Gen Buller, via his Military Secretary, sent orders to Campbell that if he could not get the ordnance away he was to destroy it. Inspector Halse of the Cape Police also requested the arrest of V/C JG van Aardt as he was commandeering local burghers and could be in Aliwal North, and warned if he was not stopped soon the local Dutch would throw their lot in with the republicans.

On 21 November Gen Buller again ordered Campbell to get the ammunition away, but not to get himself into danger. On the same day Schreiner sent a hopeful telegram that a meeting of loyal Afrikaners was going to be held in the village. By that time Campbell had left the village and Van Pletzen, De Wet and others removed the arms and ammunition that would be used against the unsuspecting Gatacre at Stormberg.²⁸⁷

²⁸⁴ CAR, AG 3394, Indictment for theft against Jan Hendrik Jacobus Greyventein, Bosch Hoek Barkly East. Statement by Greyvenstein at Preliminary Inquiry.

²⁸⁵ Lewsen (ed), *Selections from the Correspondence of John X Merriman*, p100.

²⁸⁶ CAR, AG 2013, Folio 1, Seizure of Ammunition.

²⁸⁷ CAR, AG 2013, Folio 1, Seizure of Ammunition; CAR, AG 3391, Preliminary Investigations in Cases of High Treason, Barkly East.

Olivier, who had raised the republican flag at Jamestown on 18 November, entered Barkly East and commandeered every able-bodied man who had not fled to Herschel, as well as horses, oxen, wethers, wagons, tents, flour, sugar and cash. After looting stores, Olivier took over 350 rifles and most of the ammunition from the rebels.²⁸⁸ About 100 rebels from Barkly East were later classified as Class 1 rebels due to the ammunition heist and the widespread looting.²⁸⁹ They included Hercules Johannes Botha of Mostyn, Gert Frans Botha of Castle Mahon and Abraham Johannes Buitendag of Willowleigh. Leonard Friedenthal, a German Jew and a wandering photographer had arrived from the Free State earlier that year and became an influential man on the war council and Messenger of the Court.²⁹⁰ Willem Johan Sauer of Mount Newton was appointed an inspector of camps under the authority of the republican forces, to the embarrassment of his brother who was Commissioner of Lands in the Schreiner Ministry.²⁹¹ Ten Free State families from Bloemfontein, Smithfield and Rouxville had also moved into the Barkly East district and taken out British citizenship. More than half of them were active in rebellion.²⁹²

Capt DB Hook, administrator of Herschel, quelled the threat of a tribal uprising and then held a diplomatic meeting with Cmdt Olivier. Here they agreed that the blacks and the Boers would not interfere with each other. Hook allowed Barkly East farmers and refugees from surrounding districts to move to Herschel.²⁹³ The rebel districts were always porous: Abram Wynand Cronjé of Kopshoorn, commandeered under duress, offered to hold Barkly Pass where he quietly acted as a go-between, passing letters between farmers who had fled to the Elliot district and their workers in Barkly East. He protected loyalist cattle and prevented lawlessness.²⁹⁴

Colesberg

North of Colesberg, the Free Staters, under Gen Grobler also lingered on the other side of the Orange River even after a premature announcement in the papers that Colesberg had surrendered on 2 November. The camp on the banks of the Orange had been there so long that the village were taken by surprise when the Boer forces encircled the town on 14 November, and Grobler's and Schoeman's

²⁸⁸ Amery (ed), *The Times History*, II, p294.

²⁸⁹ See Chapter 5, Looting as a weapon of war.

²⁹⁰ CAR, AG 3391, Indictment against Leonard Friedenthal contained a note from an Intelligence Officer, EH Hayward, stating that Friedenthal of Netherlands was deported as an undesirable on 17 July 1901.

²⁹¹ CAR, AG 3391, Preliminary Investigations of Class 1 Rebels, Barkly East; CAR, AG 2117, Class 1 Rebels charged with High Treason under the Indemnity and Special Tribunals Act of 1900 during May 1901.

²⁹² CAR, Cape of Good Hope, *Government Gazette*, Aliens Naturalization Act 1883 and 1889, No 857 17 November 1899.

²⁹³ Major Hook, *With Sword and Statute (On the Cape of Good Hope Frontier)*, pp368 & 377.

²⁹⁴ CAR, AG 3392 Preliminary Investigation into charges of High Treason Barkly East. Cronjé was later downgraded to a Class 2 Rebel.

Commandos occupied the town. There were no forces to oppose them. The *Vierkleur* was raised on Market Square, and the Free State proclamation read. Gen Grobler said the war had been forced on the Boers. Cmdt Schoeman appealed to mothers and sister for their prayers, which would stand as an angel between them and the bullets of the enemy so that they would not be harmed.²⁹⁵

An influential Divisional Councillor, Nicholas Albertus Janse van Rensburg of Rietfontein, who had decided to support the Free Staters, said angrily that they had asked for protection and not received anything. He had no words to express his feeling in the matter of the English withdrawing their protection and refusing them permission to purchase ammunition.²⁹⁶ The Free Staters were poorly equipped as only 300 men were properly mounted, and they were short of transport oxen.²⁹⁷ Nevertheless they could have established themselves at Arundel without opposition if only Grobler and Schoeman had not been overwhelmed by their position.²⁹⁸ The republicans said they were expecting half the white males of the district (800 men) to flock to the flag.²⁹⁹ Consequently when only a handful volunteered, Ignatius J van der Walt, MLA, and William Hofmeyr Louw of Achtertang proposed that colonists be commandeered.³⁰⁰ That Van der Walt had changed sides created a sensation as he had represented the constituency in the Cape Parliament for the past fifteen years, was a prominent member in the Afrikaner Bond, and had been urging the colonists to remain loyal. According to Scott, a local headmaster, he said he joined the Free State forces because England was unable to defend them, and he hoped that the European nations would intervene in the war.³⁰¹

A commandeering committee was organised under Van der Walt, his brother, C van der Walt, Rudolph Badenhorst, Gideon Jacobus Jooste, and Nicholas Albertus Janse van Rensburg, who issued commandeering letters to Dutch farmers. It operated until the end of February 1900.³⁰² These prosperous farmers, angry with the Government, did not expect to fall foul of the law later on.

Later the Magistrate, WC Wrench, estimated that about 200 colonists were commandeered at Colesberg. Like other districts the English-speaking colonists fled and their houses were looted. Wrench described the method used to force Dutch farmers to join them the Free Staters. Men who refused to join

²⁹⁵ *Grocott's Daily Mail Weekly War Summary*, 18 November 1899. 'Boer demonstration at Colesberg'.

²⁹⁶ CAR, AG 3400, Preliminary investigation into charges of High Treason, statement by N Levenkind, April 1900.

²⁹⁷ Breytenbach, *Die Geskiedenis van die Tweede Vryheidsoorlog*, I, p442.

²⁹⁸ *Oudtshoorn Courant*, 2 November 1899, 'Colesberg Occupied'.

²⁹⁹ *Cape Times*, 12 April 1900, Interview with Arthur Scott, Colesberg Headmaster.

³⁰⁰ *Grocott's Daily Mail Weekly War Summary*, 18 November 1899, 'Boer Demonstration' and 'A Loyal MLA!!!'.

³⁰¹ *The Colesberg Advertiser*, 12-4-1900; *Cape Times*, 21-11-1899; CAR, Cd 264, Correspondence relating to affairs in the Cape Colony, p2.

³⁰² Breytenbach, *Die Geskiedenis van die Tweede Vryheidsoorlog*, I, p448; CAR, Cd 261, Further correspondence relating to South Africa, commandeering letter issued by RJ Badenhorst 26 December, 1899; CAR, AG 2062, Correspondence Anglo-Boer War and High Treason, Miscellaneous, Return of Investigation on charges of High Treason, Albert, June, 1903.

were fined £37-10-0. Paying the fine immediately on demand did not prevent the farmer being fined repeatedly until he capitulated and signed up. In this manner men were coerced into joining.³⁰³ A few days later NF de Waal, secretary of the Afrikaner Bond, telegraphed Merriman that Colesberg was unprotected, and there was no chance of resistance in town or district.³⁰⁴ The Free Staters commandeered men, stock, stores and horses, and equipped their force. The 200 Colesberg rebels were scattered through the Free State and later the Transvaal commandos. Frans Jooste of Boschvarkfontein accepted the position of commandant of rebel forces at Kraaifontein.³⁰⁵ Hendrik Willem Lategan of Driefontein, a landowner, and voter no 263 in Ward 2, Lower Hantam, operated within the Free State forces under Cmdts J du Toit and JP Steyl. Adjutants were Evert Nicholas Badenhorst and Hendrik J van der Walt, of Twyfelpoort, son of Ignatius van der Walt, MLA. Other keen rebels were Roelf Lategan, Hendrik's brother, Danie and Ockert Oothuizen of Ratelpoort, Pieter Albertus Botha, the Magistrate's Clerk and Jan Hendricus, Adriaan, Daniel and Koort van Zyl/Zijl of Vluchtfontein.

Records of arms carried by the Colesberg rebels indicate they carried a variety of weapons, mostly the Martini-Henry, while a few carried Whitworth, Wesley Richards or sporting Mannlichters. Very few carried Mausers. Other colonists flatly refused to serve in the Boer forces. These included four men who returned home after telling Gen Schoeman that he could lead a horse to water, but could not make it drink. Many of the men commandeered later returned home and the Free Staters avoided commandeering in Murray Ward where English-speaking colonists owned the majority of farms.³⁰⁶ The commandeering notes included one signed by Petrus Jan Pienaar, Veld Cornet, who was the Sexton and the Field Cornet of Ward 1.³⁰⁷ Newspapers also reported an exodus of young men from Colesberg who handed in commandeering notes to the British forces, who had occupied Naauwpoort four days after Colesberg was invested. Here they were also building up supplies, men and equipment.³⁰⁸ Meanwhile Gen John French had taken over command of Naauwpoort on 20 November 1899 and was already probing northwards.³⁰⁹

³⁰³ CAR, CCP 1/2/1/111, A94, Occupation of the Cape Colony by Orange Free State forces, Magistrate's report.

³⁰⁴ Lewsen, *Selection from the Correspondence of JX Merriman, 1899-1905*, p105.

³⁰⁵ CAR, AG 3400, Indictment against Jooste, file 12/24.

³⁰⁶ *Oudtshoorn Courant*, 28 November 1899; *Colesberg Advertiser*, 27 July 1900.

³⁰⁷ *Oudtshoorn Courant*, 26 November 1899, Note from Carel Clementz who had been promised that he would not be commandeered, he left for Naauwpoort 16 November 1899.

³⁰⁸ *Grocott's Daily Mail Weekly War Summary*, 25 November 1899, 'General Exodus of Young Men'.

³⁰⁹ Amery (ed), *The Times History*, VII, p2.

Stormberg

On 26 November 1899 Free State forces under Grobler occupied Stormberg Junction, which was handed over to Cmdt Olivier in December 1899. Grobler, who had orders to drive back a rumoured British advance from Naauwpoort, quarrelled with Olivier over the control of the Krupp gun. They referred the matter to President Steyn and were waiting for his decision. Meanwhile the Rouxville Commando of 400, with 350 Smithfield men and the Krupp gun, laagered in the Kissieberg near Cmdt Hans Swanepoel. With Olivier were 150 Aliwal North rebels under Cmdt Gustav van Aardt. The Bethulie Commando under Floris du Plooy, and the Albert rebels under Piet Steenekamp, laagered at Kalkoenkrans west of the railway line.³¹⁰ Cmdt Jan Christian van Wyk of Broekspoort and 100 Venterstad rebels arrived at Stormberg the following day. The Albert *Vecht Kommandant* was Johannes Cornelius Strydom of Blaauwkrantz. Lourens Wepener de Wet was Adjutant to the commandant, and Jasper Martin Venter of Honingkrans, Louis Johannes Venter of Cypherfontein, Jan Frederick Coetsee of Weltevreden, and Christian Aucamp were the Veld Cornets.³¹¹ Small parties from Cradock and Middelburg also joined the rebel forces, some of them who wanted to be in at the fight and others to avoid arrest, like Jan Stapelberg of Grootkom, Cradock who was wanted for forgery.³¹² The British forces attacked at dawn on 10 December 1899.

Lieut-Col Sir William Gatacre had landed at East London and camped at Putterskraal and later Boesmanshoek, south of Molteno, from 27 November 1899. A day later he got news that the Boer forces had occupied Stormberg junction, and the Boers had ridden into Molteno to buy supplies. Gatacre then commandeered trains and removed 100 trucks of meal from the Kaffrarian Steam Mills at Molteno, and later put the mill out of order.³¹³ On 8 December 1899 Lieut Davies of the Frontier Mounted Rifles wrote home saying they could see the enemy about three miles (five kms) off this side of Molteno, but had strict orders not to fire. Gatacre would not attack the Boer forces until he had 18,000 men, Davies wrote.³¹⁴

Meanwhile on 27 November, Sauer, Member for Aliwal North and Commissioner of Crown Lands, addressed a meeting at Dordrecht attended by 200 Dutch colonists, all very anxious to know what action their government was going to take about the invasion. Sauer's speech was described as 'miserable'. He asked the division to remain loyal and not join the rebellion. He said it was not for him to

³¹⁰ Amery (ed), *The Times History*, II, pp364-68; Meintjes, *Stormberg a Lost Opportunity*, pp90-101; Du Plooy, *Aliwal Noord, Een hondred Jaar*, I, p109; CAR, AG 2062, Correspondence Anglo-Boer War and High Treason, Miscellaneous, Return of Investigation on charges of High Treason, Albert, June 1903.

³¹¹ CAR, AG 2062, Correspondence Anglo-Boer War and High Treason, Miscellaneous, Return of Investigation on charges of High Treason, Albert, June 1903.

³¹² CAR, CDK 8/23, Rebels who joined the Boer forces, warrant issued 1 November 1899.

³¹³ Meintjes, *Dorp van Drome*, p90.

³¹⁴ *The Daily Graphic*, 6 January 1900, 'Account by Lieut Brindley V Davies'.

say if the war was just or unjust, but he never thought that Aliwal North, his constituency, would be proclaimed Free State territory. He did not think the Boer forces would visit Dordrecht. But if they did they were all to keep quiet and the Ministry would pay compensation later.³¹⁵ Sauer telegraphed Schreiner that the meeting has passed a unanimous resolution: "This meeting of Afrikaners residing in Wodehouse Division deplores the existing war and expresses an earnest intention not to take part in it". A committee was elected to interview Olivier, consisting mainly of rebel suspects, except for SJ Marais of Smoorfontein, and included Rev JF Marais, PJ de Wet, and Octavius S Vermooten, an attorney and Dordrecht Bond Secretary. They drove out to find Oliver, who took little notice of them.³¹⁶

Sauer visited Queenstown where he had a very angry reception from 200 better-off Dutch-speaking farmers who had moved out of the annexed districts with their stock. Philip Botha, a Field Cornet, condemned the proclamations issued by Schreiner. He asked Sauer what the Dutch were to do. Were they to sit tamely on their farms and get themselves commandeered? Sauer assured the meeting that everything would come out all right, and, though blood was thicker than water, they should not forget that they were British colonists. He went on to say that he was convinced that "the invasion had neither the sanction nor concurrence" of President Steyn. An angry leader in the newspaper commented that Sauer must either possess a treacherous memory or be blind to the fact that Steyn had ordered his officers to cross the border. The paper asked if Sauer was pro-Boer or pro-British, and said that the farmers had left the meeting without singing the customary *God save the Queen*.³¹⁷ Merriman wrote to Pieter Jacobus (Pony) de Wet, MLA of Waschbank, junior colleague in the Wodehouse constituency, for "patience, which is our only hope of peace in the future". De Wet was playing a double game as he played a prominent part in meetings and took a lead in the rebel forces, distributed ammunition and was in the laager with the Boer commando.³¹⁸

It was obvious that Gatacre was going to attack the Boers at Stormberg; the only question was when and with how many men. It appears he became impatient and decided to use 2,600 men, the Northumberland Fusiliers, the Royal Irish Rifles, two field batteries and some Cape Mounted Riflemen, to make a night attack on Stormberg on 9 December 1899. His casualties were 627 killed, wounded and taken prisoner, and also two guns. He was at a total disadvantage, as he did not know where he was; he had not reconnoitred the area prior to the attack, his guides lost their way. He had not sent out patrols or

³¹⁵ *Oudtshoorn Courant*, 27 November 1899, 'Dordrecht meeting'.

³¹⁶ Oosthuizen, *Rebelle van die Stormberge*, p70.

³¹⁷ *Grocott's Daily Mail Weekly War Summary*, 24 November 1899.

³¹⁸ Lewsen, *Selection from the Correspondence of JX Merriman, 1899-1905*, Van Riebeeck Society, XLVII, p103; CAR, AG 2062, Correspondence Anglo-Boer War and High Treason, Miscellaneous, Return of Investigation on charges of High Treason, Albert, June, 1903.

scouts in advance of the column, and his troops, who had marched in the dark with fixed bayonets from Molteno were exhausted, as their last meal was at 4am the previous day.³¹⁹

The Boer casualties were five killed, including the rebels Jan Harm Labuschagne Olivier of Ruigtefontein, Burghersdorp and Jan Petrus Gericke of Aliwal North, and the 26 wounded including Jan van Rensburg, NJ van der Westhuizen and Piet de Wet of Dordrecht.³²⁰ That afternoon the Boers held a thanksgiving service at Stormberg when a photograph was taken of them. A good many of the rebels returned to their farms feeling they had no stomach for war.³²¹

Instead of the unexpected stunning victory uniting the burghers and the rebels, they quarrelled over the spoils. Pieter Roux, a teacher at Toomnek, Dordrecht said resentfully that they returned from Stormberg with sore shoulders as the old Martini-Henry kicked when fired from a prone position, but Olivier ignored their complaints and took the Lee-Metfords for his own men.³²² Gatacre's defeat by the Boers on 10 December became part of 'Black Week' when the British were not only defeated at Stormberg, but also at Magersfontein and Colenso. But the British did not sue for peace; instead they called out their first class reserves.³²³

Lord Frederick Roberts, who arrived at the Cape on 10 January, succeeded Buller as Commander-in-Chief in South Africa. He started by creating the Colonial Division in January 1900 under the Senior Colonial Officer, Col EY Brabant. The force of over 4,000 mounted men, was composed of 563 Cape Mounted Riflemen, 1st Brabants, 568 Kaffrarian Rifles, 420 Border Horse, 1,063 Nesbitt's Horse, 492 Marshall's Horse, 180 Eastern Province Horse, 432 Queenstown Volunteers and 300 Driscoll Scouts (Frontier Light Horse).³²⁴ The colonial troops eventually arrived at the front, and now had to campaign, due to Schreiner's neutrality policy, not only against the Free Staters but also against their own colonists in a divisive civil war.

Between Gatacre's forces at Sterkstroom and Brabant's force at Bird River, the threatened advance of the Boers into the Colony halted. Brabant, using the branch line from Sterkstroom to the Indwe coalmines, reconnoitred in force towards Dordrecht with the Cape Mounted Riflemen and Montmorency Scouts, under Capt R de V Montmorency, probing rebel defences.³²⁵

³¹⁹ Carver, *The Boer War*, p41. Account by Second Lieutenant John Preston; Meintjes, *Dorp van Drome*, pp93-100.

³²⁰ Amery (ed), *The Times History*, II, pp364-68; Meintjes, *Stormberg a Lost Opportunity*, pp90-101; Oosthuizen, *Rebelle van die Stormberge*, pp73-79; Bosman, *Slaan en Vlug*, p7, gives the death of Harm Olivier; War Museum of the Boer Republics, Bloemfontein, 3730/29, Casualty list by Dr Werdmuller gives the Boer wounded.

³²¹ Meintjes, *Stormberg a lost opportunity*, p106.

³²² Oosthuizen, *Rebelle van die Stormberge*, p77.

³²³ Amery (ed), *The Times History*, II, p20.

³²⁴ Amery (ed), *The Times History*, III, pp92-95.

³²⁵ Amery (ed), *The Times History*, III, pp92-95.

Pieter Roux said that from their laager they watched with apprehension as the English camp at Bird River and Putterskraal expanded, and old Gen Brabant and his Brabant's Horse appeared, followed by 4,000 Volunteers. They were colonial farmers who were good shots and first class horsemen. Brabants was a really sharp regiment, one of the best the English had, and there were men in it that only aimed for the head, said Roux. The rebels now had to fight against colonials who knew the terrain as well as they did, and who would not lose their way. As operations expanded against them, the rebels wryly nicknamed Brabant's Horse *Kopskoot manne*.³²⁶ The reality was that Brabant's Horse had equal respect for the rebels, and after the Stormberg debacle was nervous of them.

Cmdt Olivier and 450 men occupied Dordrecht two days after the fight at Stormberg and continued commandeering. But the Laager Commandant, JM de Beer of Bamboesfontein, complained that three days after being commandeered, men began deserting the laager. The newly elected commandant, Daniel Wilhelmus Schoeman commandeered 38 men from Ward 3 and ordered them to arrive with a horse, saddle, 30 cartridges and food for eight days. Meanwhile ten other farmers were ordered to supply three horses, four buck-wagons, 28 draught oxen with gear, as well as fifteen goat wethers and a tarpaulin.³²⁷ The colonists were discovering that rebellion was a ruinous business.

Pieter Frederick Anderson of Koffiefontein was appointed acting Landdrost of Dordrecht, Christian James Barnard of Mavisbank, who farmed at Rouxville and had only recently been naturalized, Laurence Anderson of Bothashoek and August Klee ran the War Council. They sent local loyalists to Bloemfontein as prisoners-of-war on the slightest pretext.³²⁸

However as the colonial forces gained strength, Olivier's efforts to commandeer further rebels began to wane. The colonists ignored his threats and said they wanted to shoot Carel van Pletzen and Jan de Wet for having invited the Free Staters into their districts.³²⁹ The realisation grew that the Free Staters had only occupied the Stormberg region in order to create a buffer zone for the Free State. Among the problems between the allies was that Olivier refused to hand over the smokeless Mausers to the rebels, and consequently the Free Staters did not want to fight with them as the smoke that erupted when a Martini-Henry was fired gave their position away. Olivier also favoured his own men with tents and extra food.³³⁰ He disregarded pleas from the rebels for more food for their families. In the Steyn collection is a letter from Stormberg from burghers of Albert, OFS asking for a larger food allowance for their families

³²⁶ Oosthuizen, *Rebelle van die Stormberge*, p202. Translation reads *Men who aimed for the head*.

³²⁷ CAR, AG 2133, B/8. Note found in the Boer laager at Dordrecht, 16 February 1900.

³²⁸ CAR, AG 3421, Preliminary Investigation into charges of High Treason of DJ Schoeman; July 1902.

³²⁹ *Grocott's Daily Mail Weekly War Summary*, 10 February 1900.

³³⁰ Breitenbach, *Die Geskiedenis van die Tweede Vryheidsoorlog*, IV, p454.

in January 1900, saying that two buckets of meal per adult per month was too little. It was signed by J Kruger, JD Coetsee, HJ Coetsee, R Pelser and eleven other Albert rebels.³³¹

Dalgety launched a succession of attacks on Dordrecht, beginning on 22 December when the CMR and Brabant's Horse occupied the town; the rebels falling back to Labuschagnesnek. Shortly afterwards Brabant ordered their withdrawal. Olivier then informed Schoeman that the 600 rebels from Barkly East, Dordrecht and Aliwal North were to protect the Dordrecht district, and he pulled back to Stormberg Junction.³³² Truckloads of livestock, grain and forage were consigned virtually on a daily basis from Aliwal North to feed these men.³³³

On 3 January the police station, two miles (three km) south of Molteno, held by 250 men, was attacked by a Boer force with the two guns captured at Stormberg. One was positioned on the Loperberg. Gatacre despatched reinforcements by rail and road from Bushmanshoek and Sterkstroom. The 79th Field Battery then opened fire from 4,500 yards (4100 m) resulting in the withdrawal of the Boer force and the gun. The police station was then reinforced by 120 mounted troops, with adequate supplies of ammunition.³³⁴ The rebels withdrew to a valley east of the Loperberg, but not before many of them had been recognised by the colonial forces who then made detailed statements before a local magistrate identifying those they had seen.

Wodehouse rebels captured by the Colonial Division early in 1900 near Dordrecht were all found guilty of High Treason before the Eastern District Court in May 1900. Laurence Anderson of Botha's Hoek, was sentenced to a year's imprisonment, a fine of £500 or an additional sentence of twelve months in gaol. George Annandale of Annan Water was sentenced to two year's imprisonment or a further year's imprisonment; Cornelius Johannes Greyling of Schilderkrantz was fined £50 or one year's imprisonment and Octavius Septimus Vermooten, an attorney who was arrested in January 1900 when he went to Queenstown on legal business for a client, thinking that gave him immunity from prosecution, was sentenced to a lengthy four year's imprisonment.³³⁵ At Vermooten's preliminary investigation, Corporal Marais of the Cape Police stated that he had been captured by the Boers on 15 December 1899 and had been interrogated by Vermooten at a *Krygsraad* meeting at Snyman's Hotel in Dordrecht on the movements of British troops at Queenstown. Landdrost J de Wet was present as well as PJ de Wet MLA. The following day Vermooten, who acted as clerk, read out a long charge to Marais, and as a result, he

³³¹ FAR, A 156 1/1/2 57, MT Steyn Collection, 8 January 1900, Request for a larger food allowance.

³³² *Grocott's Daily Mail Weekly War Summary*, 10 February 1900.

³³³ CAR, AG 3389, Preliminary Investigation into High Treason, Stephanus van Aardt, statement by W Branfield, 15 March 1900.

³³⁴ *The Daily Graphic*, 3 January 1900, 'With Gatacre. The fighting at Bushman'shoek'.

³³⁵ CAR, AG 2117, Class 1 rebels charged with High Treason before the High Court in Grahamstown, May 1900.

was sent to Bloemfontein Gaol from where he and four others escaped and later reached the British lines at Modder River.³³⁶

Action in the Colesberg district

When Kruger urged Steyn to destroy the railway line between Naauwpoort and De Aar, Steyn asked for reinforcements, and as a result 800 Transvalers under Gen Hendrik Schoeman arrived in Colesberg on 1 December 1899.³³⁷ Schoeman and the Free State commandants feared a major advance by the British to relieve Kimberley, and after consulting Steyn, Grobler was ordered to occupy Stormberg Junction.³³⁸ Schoeman then took command of the Boer forces holding Colesberg, and was later condemned by his officers for failing to advance into the Cape Colony and for the slackness of his command. Manie Maritz, a member of the ZARP police, also complained of a lack of order, organisation and discipline in the Boer camp.³³⁹

There were not many accounts of the rebels in action. One of the most detailed was about Hendrik Lategan of Driefontein's, plan to capture a Rimington Guide. He suggested that Van Zyl (probably Jan van Zijl) wear khaki uniform as disguise. In this way, Frank Weakley, was trapped and captured. Weakley said Lategan threatened to shoot him, but changed his mind when the Guide warned him about the penalty for murder. He was sent to the prison camp at Waterfall.³⁴⁰

The Bloemfontein, Winburg and Senekal Commandos, plus the rebels, occupied the hills east and southeast of Arundel with two guns. Lategan became increasingly daring and attempted to outflank a British force at Arundel on 12 December 1899, and cut it off from its base at Naauwpoort. The Boers were driven off when the British were reinforced, and were forced out of their position by British Armstrongs. The rebels demonstrated that they had skill and daring, and could become a formidable force if they were better armed and better led.³⁴¹ A rebel who felt the poor leadership and lack of action was Jacob Naser of Modderfontein, Colesberg, a member of GH Gravette's Germiston Commando. Naser, with Brazelle, went scouting in the Steynsburg and Middelburg districts, and returned with letters for Schoeman from men who pleaded for him to advance south into the Cape Colony but Schoeman did not move. Naser was also involved in the skirmish on New Year's Day when an attacking force under Maj

³³⁶ *Grocott's Daily Mail Weekly War Summary*, 15 February 1900, 'Queenstown'.

³³⁷ Breytenbach, *Die Geskiedenis van die Tweede Vryheidsoorlog*, I, p437.

³³⁸ Breytenbach, *Die Geskiedenis van die Tweede Vryheidsoorlog*, I, p454.

³³⁹ M Maritz, *My Lewe en Strewe*, p18.

³⁴⁰ *Colesberg Advertiser*, 27 July 1900. When Weakley returned from the Waterfall POW camp near the Portuguese border he made statements against Lategan and his brother Roelf, D Oosthuizen of Ratelpoort, Pieter Albertus Botha, the Magistrate's Clerk and others.

³⁴¹ Breytenbach, *Die Geskiedenis van die Tweede Vryheidsoorlog*, II, pp193-94.

FWN McCrachen was driven back, and was on sentry duty when the Suffolk Regiment attacked at Graskop on 6 January and Gen Piet de Wet's men inflicted heavy casualties on them in the hand-to-hand fighting that followed.³⁴²

In the cemetery at Colesberg the war graves of JA Venter of Loksfontein and J van der Walt of Wildefontein, both of Colesberg, and of H Lategan of Tarkastad, are a reminder of the time when the colonial rebels fought and died for republican ideals.

³⁴² Wessels (ed), *Die Oorlogsherinneringe van Kommandant Jacob Petrus Neser*, p27-28.

CHAPTER 2

THE FIRST REBELLION COLLAPSES

After Stormberg

At New Year 1900 Gen Olivier returned to Stormberg with 300 Free Staters, and armed with the Krupp gun strongly entrenched his position. A week previously rebel forces had clashed with Capt Henry Lukin, commanding the Artillery of the Cape Mounted Riflemen, near Jamestown.¹ The result was that Olivier, once so arrogant and energetic, had lost any initiative he once might have had. His confidence had certainly dwindled as he told people in Barkly East he once thought the English soldiers could not shoot, but after fighting in the Cape Colony had changed his mind.²

Olivier's rebel force totalled just over 3,000. But the fire had gone out of the rebellion and rebels were deserting, drifting away, dissatisfied with his leadership as the Colonial Division continued to entrench itself and, backed by CMR Artillery, was becoming bolder.³ Arnoldus Greyling of Winterslow, Dordrecht was in the deputation that went to Olivier and asked him why they were not derailing the railway line north of Queenstown and blocking the advance of troops and supplies to Putterskraal and Sterkstroom. The general reacted and ordered that 300 rebels occupy Kromhoogte in the Steynsburg district. However when they asked Olivier for a strong force of Free Staters to support them, he refused to weaken his guards around Stormberg. Without the support of the Rouxville and Smithfield men the rebels refused to advance unsupported, and Olivier dropped the plan.⁴ The rebels then pleaded for a guarantee for their safety. Olivier replied that he, Jan Olivier with his blood, was their guarantee.⁵

May Johnson, wife of the Burghersdorp headmaster, writing a continuous letter to her sister which she eventually posted in March 1900, wrote that Olivier, who had complained that the English-speaking inhabitants in Burghersdorp had been treated too lightly, ordered his men to search for arms and ammunition throughout the town and location in January. Unable to find anything, he allowed his

¹ See Chapter 5: When the rebels needed leadership.

² *Grocott's Daily Mail Weekly War Summary*, 10 February 1900. 'Deserted by 'Sneak' Rebels'.

³ CAR, AG 2133, Rules of Laager Commandant L/17/10, signed GC de Wet; FAR, A 156 A/1/1/2, MT Steyn Collection, Request of fifteen burghers of Albert, Orange Free State, 3 January, 1900. They complained their families received only two buckets of meal each per month and asked for meat and coffee.

⁴ Breytenbach, *Geskiedenis van die Tweede Vryheidsoorlog*, IV, p453.

men to ransack the houses of local people and the Free Staters pilfered anything they could find, including £30 worth of jewellery from a Mrs W Knight. Meyer, the local barber, and his two sons, who had refused five or six times to be commandeered were again threatened with expulsion, but he wired the President and Olivier's orders were countermanded. Rumours of Boer losses circulated, although Johnson said it was difficult to discover precise details. Rebels were certainly returning home ill; both her Dutch neighbour's sons contracted typhoid; one died and their sister, who had nursed them, died from the disease as well.⁶ Very few people were then aware that typhoid was a water-borne disease, and that drinking boiled coffee was an important reason why many Boers did not contract it. Drinking water from polluted streams was one of the many ways why so many soldiers and civilians contracted typhoid during the South African War.

Olivier left it to Cmdts Danie Schoeman of Dordrecht, Gideon Cronjé of Barkly East and Arnoldus Jacobus Greyling of Lady Grey to defend the Dordrecht district. On 7 February Dordrecht rebels led by Schoeman attacked the Cape Mounted Riflemen's camp at Bird River under Lieut DA Hare-Bowers, opening fire at 6,000 yards (5,486 m). They were using of the Krupp gun because they shelled the camp for some hours, hitting the guard tent and fatally wounding a Trooper and severely injuring another soldier in a gun pit. The rebels advanced along the bed of the Bird River in force, but were kept in check by maxims and rifle fire and a sally from the Royal Scots. Gen Gatacre appeared with reinforcements from Sterkstroom that included the CMR guns. Capt Lukin fired 52 shells that drove the rebels back. On the same day another rebel group fired on the camp at Penhoek, but they pulled back when their fire was returned.⁷ The colonial forces communicated by telegraph or heliograph and reinforced each other when needed. In contrast only the Albert rebels were with the Free Staters at Stormberg, the remainder operated in a separate group with little co-ordination between them.

There were colonists who all along had serious doubts about the legality of the Free State occupation even though letters, telegrams and commandeering letters were now all addressed to Dordrecht, Orange Free State. Stephanus Strydom of Leeuwplaats, Albert and George William Aldrich of Grootvlei, Knapdaar had refused to be commandeered. They then asked for a pass and travelled to Bloemfontein and were granted an interview with President Steyn in January 1900. They asked for his protection as British citizens as Gen Grobler promised. Steyn then informed Strydom and Aldrich that they were no longer British colonists, but were private burghers of the Free State.

⁵ BMJ Greyling, *Greyling Boerehelde Geskiedenis*, p7.

⁶ Cory Library, MS 10.581, M Johnson, letter written during the Boer occupation of Burghersdorp between November 1899 and March 1900.

⁷ A Wessels (ed), *Anglo-Boer War, Diary of Herbert Gwynne Howell*, p27. Howell stated that two members of the CMR were killed and three captured; *South African Field Force Casualty List, 1899-1902*, October 1899 to March 1900, p105, states five captured; Williams, *Record of the Cape Mounted Riflemen*, p64.

Strydom asked Steyn if annexing a district and commandeering its people was in accordance with international law. Steyn insisted that the occupation of the northern Cape was legal, and Albert was part of the Free State, but he would only give them protection if they went to the front. Aldrich reported later that when Strydom, who was a colonial Field Cornet, said he could be shot if he joined the Free State forces, Steyn laughed and said that if that happened they would shoot six of the best English officers.⁸ The men returned to their farms in Albert, furious as they did not believe Steyn.

The Free State president wrote to the Secretary of State on 30 January 1900, that he had been informed that the British authorities had arrested Afrikaner inhabitants of the northern Cape Colony on a charge of High Treason. He stated that as these persons had joined the Free State forces, and were citizens of that state, they should be treated as prisoners-of-war.⁹ Cape and Natal rebels captured under arms by the British were in fact sent to prisoner-of-war camps on St Helena, Ceylon and India. However when they returned after the war they appeared before the colonial courts as British citizens on charges of High Treason.

Dordrecht reoccupied

On 14 February 1900 Cmdt Schoeman commandeered fourteen suits, 35 pairs of trousers and 28 hats from Morum Bros at Dordrecht and divided them out between his men, requesting that the bill be sent to the Free State Government. That was possibly the last handout they would receive, because a few days later the Colonial Division under Brabant reappeared, determined to drive them out of town.¹⁰

On 15 February 1900, French who had broken through at Ramdam, bypassed Gen Cronjé at Magersfontein and relieved Kimberley. On the same day, further south in the Cape Colony, in a far more modest fashion, the Colonial Division also outflanked Olivier who was entrenched at Stormberg. At dawn 1200 men of Brabant's Horse with contingents of the Cape Mounted Riflemen, as well as its artillery, made a general advance eastward from Penhoek towards Dordrecht, using the farm tracks that ran along the top of the mountain range. A halt was made on Jakhals Kop and the two regiments divided into sixteen squadrons. The scouts came under fire at Jakhals Kop from the rebels who were thought to number about 600 and were blocking the route to Dordrecht with two guns. The CMR guns were then pulled up to a vantage point where they took advantage of trenches built by

⁸ CAR, Cd 261, Enclosure 9 of 51, Statements by S Strydom of Leeuwplaats, Albert and GW Aldrich of Grootvlei, Knapdaar, 12 April 1900, Enclosure 10 of 51, Statement of William Brandt, 11 April 1900.

⁹ CAR, Cd 261, Enclosure 5 of 30, January 1900. President Steyn to Joseph Chamberlain. The claim was rejected.

¹⁰ Williams, *The Record of the Cape Mounted Riflemen*, p68. CMR casualties were seven killed and seven wounded; CAR, AG 3421, Preliminary Investigation into charges of High Treason, Cmdt DWJ Schoeman, copies of receipts commandeered.

the Boer forces previously. The attackers broke into skirmishing order and made good progress across the open ground.

Later that afternoon the Boer gunners fired with such accuracy that the colonial forces pulled back some of the guns. The Boers held off the Brabant's through steady firing, but they retired to the laager at nightfall while the colonials remained in position in the *veld*. The next morning scouts discovered that the Boer forces had withdrawn to the ridges behind the village. When Maj CF Sprenger led his men into Dordrecht the following day they came under a fresh attack from the 9-pdr Krupp gun and marksmen positioned in the hills above the town. After the 15-pdrs had disabled the carriage of the Krupp gun, the Boers retreated to Labuschagnessnek, a huge rocky formation north of Dordrecht.¹¹

The Cape Police continued their drives through the Stormberg region in February, rounding up cattle from rebel farms, leaving just enough stock behind to feed the families. At one of these sales on 20 February the Deputy Sheriff of Queenstown auctioned off rebel cattle for £3,600. The Boer forces made no attempt to intercept the drives.¹² When the Free State forces invaded the Cape Colony, many pro-Boer Dutch colonists, angry with the Schreiner Government, had bent to their mixture of persuasion and coercion. Now the rebels realised they would have to continue the fight or surrender and face charges of High Treason. It was becoming apparent that if the Free State forces remained inactive in their Stormberg stronghold, the commandos would be driven out of the new districts.¹³

Once Gatacre received information that the Dordrecht rebels were holding Labuschagnessnek, he moved from Sterkstroom to Molteno intent on launching a second attack on Olivier at Stormberg. He went out a strong force to reconnoitre the Boer position at Stormberg with 1,000 men on 23 February. On his right was Captain Montmorency leading his 80 scouts. The Boer forces at Stormberg saw the British forces approaching when they reached Zwavelkrans, six miles (ten kms) from Molteno. Between them was a long narrow hill, steep on the one side and with a gentle slope on the other. Montmorency and his scouts recklessly stormed up the steep side of Schoemanskop, unaware that the Boers had reached the summit from the other side. The burghers fired down at them from point blank range, killing Montmorency and five of his scouts, some of them local men. One of them was the well-liked Frank Collett, who worked for the *Albert Times*. Collett's death was much regretted and made a lasting impression on the rebels. Many of them, including Louis Wepener De Wet of Modderfontein and Jan Frederick Coetzee of Weltevrede, both of Albert, referred to the fight later, not as where Montmorency, the VC died, but called Schoemanskop instead "the place where

¹¹ Williams, *Record of the Cape Mounted Riflemen*, p66; CMR casualties were one killed and one wounded; Capt Robert George Mullins of Brabants Horse, letter of 22 February 1900, Cory Library, Ms 17.015.

¹² *Grocott's Daily Mail Weekly War Summary*, 20 February 1900.

¹³ Scholtz, *Waarom die Boere die Oorlog Verloor het*, p75.

Collett was killed".¹⁴ After an indecisive skirmish in a downpour, Gatacre returned to Molteno discomfited as the capture of Stormberg had again evaded him.

The Free Staters began building drifts through the Orange River in the vicinity of Barkly East and Lady Grey. Herds of commandeered cattle and sheep, as well as wagons loaded with stores, were driven through to the Free State.¹⁵ Almost 1,000 claims were later submitted for compensation for war losses incurred by the forces of the Orange Free State, totalling £211,083-2-4. The claims were restricted to damage to crops, fences, livestock, merchandise, household and other goods, farm produce, damage to lands and buildings and miscellaneous damage, and were submitted in the eight divisions of the north-eastern districts after the first invasion between November 1899 and March 1900.¹⁶ In the republican forces war booty was legitimate, and large quantities of commandeered stock and goods were taken from loyalist and rebel alike.

The Colesberg front

In contrast to the Stormberg region the morale of the Boer forces on the Colesberg front was far higher. The Boer forces improved as a fighting unit after Gen De la Rey arrived and stiffened the men, sometimes driving them back to their positions with his whip.¹⁷ Under the dynamic De la Rey, the Boer forces planned to drive the British troops back to Naauwpoort and De Aar. Cmdt Lategan, leading 150 men on 5 February forced the British back to Slingsfontein from Potfontein. Throughout February the Boers, under De la Rey's, held the British advance back. A lively Gen Piet de Wet replaced Grobler.¹⁸ The British abandoned Colesberg Koppie as they were massing to relieve Kimberley and on 20 February, after another successful skirmish at Rietfontein, the Boers drove the weakened British forces back to Arundel.¹⁹

At this crucial juncture De la Rey was recalled to help extricate Gen Piet Cronjé's men encircled at Paardeberg.²⁰ The fight went out of the Boer line. Lategan and his rebels departed with the Boer forces from the Cape Colony. The 6,000 to 7,000 retreating burghers took with them about 600 supply wagons and 10,000 oxen, forming a convoy 25 miles (40 kms) long. Much of the stock

¹⁴ CAR, AG 2062, Correspondence Anglo-Boer War and High Treason, Miscellaneous, Return of Investigation on charges of High Treason, Albert, June 1903; Meintjes, *Stormberg A Lost Opportunity*, pp132,134; AV Oosthuizen, *A Guide to the Battlefields, Graves and Monuments of the Anglo-Boer War in the North Eastern Cape. 100 Hundred Anniversary 1899-1999*, p20, contains a photograph of the Montmorency Scout Memorial in Molteno.

¹⁵ *Grocott's Daily Mail Weekly War Summary*, 22 February 1900.

¹⁶ Cape of Good Hope, *Official Publications*, G 60-1904, Report of the War Losses Compensation Commission, p26. Losses claimed and assessed by inhabitants of seven divisions as a result of the first invasion of the Cape Colony by the forces of the Orange Free State (Colesberg losses will be dealt with separately).

¹⁷ Maritz, *My Lewes en Strewe*, p19.

¹⁸ Johannes Meintjes, *De la Rey, Lion of the West*, pp145-149.

¹⁹ Amery (eds), *The Times History*, III, p467.

had been taken from the Colesberg district. Later 362 claims were submitted to the War Compensation Commission totalling £102,358-2-4, of which £52,337-12-0 were claims submitted for direct losses of livestock as a result of the first invasion of the Cape Colony by forces of the Orange Free State. British forces under Gen RAP Clements occupied Colesberg on 28 February 1900. Clements ordered the arrest of numerous 'Colesberg Dutch' when he arrived.²¹ Clarence de Jager, who was articled to the lawyer Schultz, arrived in Colesberg in June 1900 to take up his post. He wrote that the first thing he saw in the main street was a dead horse. "It was an awful place, no amusements and no cafés. Very bad feeling between the English and Afrikaans; when the Boers took Colesberg they arrested nine English-speaking people and kept them in a guardhouse; the local Afrikaners did nothing to get them released. When the British took the town the tables were turned and many Afrikaners were then arrested on trivial matters and their plight was ignored by the English speaking."²²

Expedition to the northwest Cape

In Gordonia and Kenhardt the news of the invasion of the Cape Colony had spread like wildfire, and contact was made by pro-Boer colonists with Gen Cronjé who organised an expedition to proclaim the northwest as part of the Free State. Lane, who was in Cronjé's laager, reported "great talk of 6,000 colonial Boers at a place called Prieska, waiting to join the Boer forces".²³ On 26 January Gen Cronjé sent 200 men off from Magersfontein and told them to return with 2,000 colonists. The Transvaal Government, who financed the expedition, instructed that the inhabitants were to be commandeered for war service as a burgher force.²⁴ On 8 February 1900 the expedition left Douglas under Assistant Hoofd Cmdt Lukas Petrus Steenkamp of Venterstad, and Cmdt PJ Liebenberg, promoted Combat General.²⁵ Kuruman rebels, Frans Petrus van Kradenburg of Neyland, George Simon Pearston of Rooiwal and Jan Hendrik Boshoff of Lynputs looted stores and farms for supplies as they went.²⁶ AP Roos of Klerksdorp, who was in the rear of the commando, arrived at a

²⁰ Amery (eds), *The Times History*, III, p487.

²¹ *Grocott's Daily Mail Weekly War Summary*, 'Rensburg', 2 March 1900; Cape of Good Hope, *Official Publications*, G 60-1904, Report of the War Losses Compensation Commission, p26. Losses claimed and assessed by inhabitants of Colesberg as a result of the first invasion of the Cape Colony by the forces of the Orange Free State.

²² Clarence De Jager, 'Memoirs', private archives of Julian de Jager, Beaufort West, p27.

²³ Lane (ed), *The War Diary of Burgher Jack Lane*, p73.

²⁴ CAR, Cd 261, Nos74,74b, Instructions to Assistant Head Cmdt Steenkamp by JS Ferreira, Head Commandant, 31 January 1900.

²⁵ M Cleaver and De Fenton, *The War Letter of an English Burgher*, p86.

²⁶ CAR, AG 2033, Folio 15, Details of later Treason charges.

farm that had been looted and found that "everything had been ruined", wrote he could not thank God sufficiently that the war would never come to their part of the country.²⁷

Steenkamp proclaimed Prieska, on the Orange River, Boer territory on 16 February 1900, and 300 colonists were commandeered while in a mass exodus 420 English, loyal Dutch and 'natives' trekked to Carnarvon, Britstown and Victoria West. Liebenberg trekked on to Houwater, near Britstown where he received support, and Kenhardt was proclaimed Free State territory on 28 February after a short-lived opposition from the Basters collapsed.²⁸ A commando, led by Jacobus P Jooste of Worcester, arrived in Upington on 3 March. Ockert and George van Schalkwyk, who had been missing from the village, returned with them.²⁹ Jooste held meetings at the Court House in Upington, at Neimollers and in the church that belonged to the Basters. They were disarmed and had their firearms smashed. Jooste said he had come both on business and on invitation, and those who wanted to be burghers of the Free State could attend his meetings, while the British subjects were to leave the country within eight days. The Town Clerk, Barend Jacobus Burger van der Merwe, the missionary, Rev Christian Wilhelm Schroeder, two farmers, Gert Johannes Kotzee and Christian George van Schalkwyk, and a wagon maker, Pieter Jacobus Jacobs, were elected members of the war council and signed an oath of allegiance to the Free State.³⁰ Small local armed commandos rode through the district, more intent on looting country stores than anything else.³¹

Roberts, alive to the danger of further Boer expansion, detailed forces to drive the republicans out of the northwest Cape. Col Sir John Adye's Column clashed with Gen Liebenberg at Houwater on 6 March 1900 and afterwards the Boers spread reports that The City of London Volunteers had lost 170 men, but the figures proved to be hopelessly exaggerated as the *South African Field Force Casualty List* for that regiment listed six wounded and five missing near Britstown.³² Jooste assured his supporters that the Boers were looking for a port on the west coast to bring in arms and ammunition as they were expecting 25,000 trained French soldiers, disguised as mechanics or miners.³³ At the same time HMS *Niobe* was despatched from the Cape to Walfisch Bay, where the ship remained a few weeks because the German Government feared an attack by a commando of

²⁷ Roos, AP, unpublished diary, 1 October 1899 to 31 January 1900, Klerksdorp Museum, 31 January 1899. It was difficult for many rebels and republicans to believe that the colonials would retaliate when they got the chance.

²⁸ Cleaver and De Fenton, *The War Letters of an English Burgher*, p88; CAR, CCP 1/2/1/111, The Occupation by the OFS of the Cape Colony, Magistrate's report.

²⁹ CAR, AG 3404 Regina versus Van Schalkwyk and others, statement by BJB van der Merwe.

³⁰ CAR, AG 3404, Preliminary Investigation into Charges of High Treason, Gordonias *Krygsraad*, Statement by JTA Verskuur, Assistant Magistrate.

³¹ CAR, AG 3404, Regina vs Van Schalkwyk, statement by Daniel Turpin.

³² Cleaver and De Fenton, *The War Letters of an English Burgher*, p91; *South African Field Force Casualty List*, Section from 11 October 1899 to 20 March 1900, pp95-96.

³³ CAR, CCP 1/2/1/111, The Occupation by the OFS of the Cape Colony, Magistrate's report; *Grocott's Daily Mail Weekly War Summary*, 11 March 1899.

Boers inside German South-West Africa and had asked Britain defend the port.³⁴ Nothing came of either story, but this was a typical rumour that flourished because there was no hard news.

The pattern of the invasion in the northwest Cape was identical to that in the Stormberg. An armed commando would make its appearance in an isolated village, and before the astonished inhabitants the Cape Police, the magistrate and civil servants would pack their bags and leave the colonists behind, apparently forever, to a changed nationality, a new flag and to life as part of the Free State.

When a Boer despatch rider arrived with news that three British columns were converging on Prieska, the bubble burst. The republican forces fled when they learnt of the disaster that had befallen Cronjé. In Kenhardt and Upington the war councils disbanded in panic, and many surrendered after the Magistrate and Clerks returned while others decided to fight on.³⁵ Cmdt Lukas Steenkamp fled to German South West Africa, and arrived some months later as a refugee in The Netherlands. At Prieska Andries de Wet abandoned orders to proclaim Fraserburg as Orange Free State territory, and joined Gen Liebenberg, Cmdt Jooste and Advocate Mostyn Cleaver and trekked back to the Transvaal with a party of fleeing rebels.³⁶ Although this expedition appeared to be of little military value, it had considerable significance as the area over which the Anglo-Boer War was waged expanded. Three columns under Gen H Settle, Sir Charles Parson and Sir John Adye were also diverted from the main theatre of war to the Cape Colony.³⁷

After the capture of Cronjé, President Steyn recalled his burghers from the Cape Colony to defend the Orange Free State, and the worst fears of the rebels were realised. Olivier and his men withdrew from Stormberg; some left by train and others trekked towards Aliwal North via Burghersdorp, avoiding Dordrecht. The Free Staters drove stock and heavily laden wagons northwards. Behind them parties of local Burghersdorp rebels slipped away to lay down arms, hoping for leniency from the British.³⁸

On the Natal front morale was also low. Frank Hill of Kroonstad, now in charge of the commissariat for the commando on the northern side of the Tugela River, commented sadly, "It's 23rd February and today is Independence Day! It's been 46 years since the OFS became an independent state. One feels sad to know that perhaps this will be the last birthday we shall keep. Perhaps when the next birthday comes round we shall see this state abolished and be in process of forming a united

³⁴ McKenzie, *The History of the Duke of Edinburgh's Own Rifles*, p41.

³⁵ Cleaver and De Fenton, *The War Letter of an English Burgher*, p93.

³⁶ CAR, Cd 261, Report of Sir Alfred Milner, Further Correspondence Relating to South Africa, 6 June 1900, No 74 and Enclosure 1; PHS van Zyl, *Die Helde Album van ons Vryheidsstryd*, p107; Kommandant A de Wet, Adjutant H van Doornik und GC du Plessis, *Die Buren in der Kapkolonie im Kriege mit England*, IV, of *Im Kampf um Süd-Afrika*, pp68-85.

³⁷ Headlam, *The Milner Papers*, I, p34.

³⁸ May Johnson, letter from at Burghersdorp 18 November 1899 to 7 March 1899, Cory Library, MS 10.581.

South Africa. Whatever happens to us, it is to be hoped peace and joy will be throughout the land. The war still rages with all its bitterness".³⁹

Labuschagnesnek

While the Colonial Division built up supplies and armaments in Dordrecht, Schoeman and Van Aardt struggled to control their men, whose morale and discipline reached rock bottom. Ignoring Michael de Wet, a senior Free Stater, Van Aardt sent an urgent telegram to President Steyn on 22 February requesting a Combat General and 300 men as reinforcements only to receive the unlikely reply that Gen De la Rey would be contacted and sent down.⁴⁰

The Dordrecht, Jamestown and Barkly East men held onto Labuschagnesnek until 6 March 1900. Mullins of Brabants wrote that they learnt to fight the rebel way and take every bit of cover possible. If their legs and arms stuck out from behind the rocks they were more than likely to be hit. The fighting however remained sporadic until the Colonial Division, led by Maj C Maxwell of the Cape Mounted Riflemen, left Dordrecht before dawn on 4 March, and making a detour of ten miles (sixteen kms) the column arrived at the foot of the ridge commanding the Boer position from the east. Maxwell and 100 men, not waiting for stragglers, plus 100 men from Brabant's Horse climbed up and occupied a high point east of the main rebel position, which they had held during the day but vacated each night when the men went down to the laager. Next morning the CMR gunners had moved into position and were waiting for the Dordrecht rebels, led by Van Aardt, as they climbed up the rocks, and fired down on them when they were only 250 yards off. The rebels regrouped and the firing continued. However that night the Royal Engineers pulled the two 15pdr guns to another vantage point in the dark. Their first shells fired at daybreak put the Boer gun out of commission. It is probably at this point that Cmdt Arnoldus Jacobus Greyling of the Lady Grey rebels was fatally wounded. The Barkly East rebels on Pappasnek began to withdraw when they saw they were in danger of being cut off. Although they kept up a 'brave and plucky fight', the exhausted rebels, who had little to eat or drink during the last couple of days, fled Labuschagnesnek by midday 6 March 1900.⁴¹

Hendrik Francois de Wet of Vaalkop, Lady Grey said they lay behind the stony ridges and were still shooting the English, unaware that Olivier and his Free Staters had already crossed the bridge at Aliwal North into the Free State. He said it was hot and he was so thirsty that he chewed the

³⁹ Hill, long letter to his wife, 23 February 1900, Private Archives of Mrs J Muller of Rondebosch, Cape Town.

⁴⁰ CAR AG 3421 Preparatory examination of Daniel WJ Schoeman charged with High Treason, 23 June 1902; *Grocott's Daily Mail Weekly War Summary*, 30 March 1900, quoting documents found abandoned at Labuschagnesnek.

suurpol to get some moisture into his parched mouth.⁴² Pieter Roux of Toomnek, Dordrecht wrote that three of the rebels, all friends, died of head wounds on Labuschagnesnek. Theunis van der Merwe, Nicolaas de Bruin, Hans Labuschagne and A Lubbe of Dordrecht were killed, and about seventeen other rebels were wounded.⁴³

The Dordrecht rebels then took the road to Roodehoogte and Aliwal North, while other local commandos surrendered and withdrew towards Barkly East. A large number of Martini-Henry rifles, numerous cattle and sheep and a trunk of incriminating documents were discovered abandoned in the camp.⁴⁴

The situation was uncertain, and, as the majority of rebels were ready to surrender, a meeting took place with Maj Hook at Lady Grey three days later. N Smuts and PJ de Wet represented Aliwal North; F Venter spoke for the Barkly East and C van Heerden for the Dordrecht rebels. Smuts explained that they had spoken to Olivier near Aliwal North and asked him what protection he was going to give them because he and the other Free Staters had dragged them into the present situation. Olivier said that the only protection he could now give was that they crossed the Orange River and fight for the Free State in the Orange Free State. Smuts discussed the commandeering with Hook and said there was no other way open to them [but rebellion] as they were not given protection by either the Colonial or Imperial Governments. Hook said the meeting decided that as the Free State forces were still in the Cape Colony, rebels should surrender their weapons at the nearest military post. Brabant and Gatacre had issued various proclamations, and while clarification was being sought on them Hook suggested they lay down arms, obtain a permit and return home until summoned to appear by the authorities.⁴⁵

The annexation of the Stormberg region ends

Olivier returned to Aliwal North still leading the Rouxville and Smithfield Commandos, trailed by a few hundred rebels. He crossed the Frere Bridge and established his laager on the Free State side of the town while his men looted shops and sheep were driven through the streets as the retreating Boers snatched supplies. Hundreds of rebels milled around, waiting to surrender, expecting

⁴¹ Oosthuizen, *Rebelle van die Stormberge*, pp 92-93; Williams, *Record of the Cape Mounted Riflemen*, pp67-68; Mullins, letter, Cory Library, MS 17.015, 7 March 1900.

⁴² Oosthuizen, *Rebelle van die Stormberge*, p94, 'Suurpol' or 'copper wire' is a very a tough grass.

⁴³ Oosthuizen, *Rebelle van die Stormberge*, pp 93,239; Eight Boers were killed and seventeen wounded, *South African Field Force Casualty List*, section from October 1899 to 20 March 1900. From the CMR eight were killed and seven wounded.

⁴⁴ CAR, AG 2133, Letters and Documents intercepted by the British at Dordrecht 16 February 1900 and March 1900 included the Electoral List of Ward 4 Wodehouse.

⁴⁵ CAR, AG 3387, Annexure C 482, Notes by Hook on a conference held at Commercial Hotel, Lady Grey, 9 March 1900.

that an announcement that peace had been signed would be issued shortly. The Colonial forces under Maj Henderson of 1st Brabant's with two 2.5in guns appeared on the outskirts of Aliwal North on 11 March, found the Frere bridge intact, and raced over it to a ridge on the other side. They came under attack from the Free Staters and the party was hard-pressed. The Boer guns opened up and they tried to rush the 15-pounder guns, but were driven back. Henderson heliographed the CMR under Lukin for help, and he raced over and reinforced them. Eventually the CMR Artillery re-crossed the Bridge to the colonial side, with one killed and ten wounded, as they received orders from Gen Brabant that they were not to enter the Free State. This order was later countermanded and the colonial forces crossed the bridge for a second time into the Free State. The Boer forces withdrew along the riverbank and dug themselves in, firing sporadically at the town until the Border Horse under Maj CP Crew appeared and drove them off.⁴⁶ In 23 days the Colonial Division had cleared the Free Staters from the northeastern Cape Colony, and the annexation was at an end.

About 30 rebels, who had read a proclamation from Lord Roberts nailed to the bridge and giving them generous terms, refused to fight on. When Cmdt Olivier drove them out of the laager with his sjambok, Gideon J Steyn of Welbedacht, Albert said they then took shelter behind a ridge and surrendered at the first opportunity.⁴⁷

Olivier and his commando rode north early on 15 March in a sorry state, while 300 rebels remained behind to lay down arms at the Magistrate's Court.⁴⁸ The rebels had wanted to surrender on 9 March, but Cmdt Van Aardt had persuaded them to keep on fighting. They all lost confidence in him when they found out that he had received excellent surrender terms from Brabant before the Labuschagnesnek fight, and had not consulted them.⁴⁹ A further reason for surrendering was that PJ (Pony) de Wet MLA had an interview in Bloemfontein with President Steyn at the end of January 1900, and he had given him what was at best an ambiguous letter. On the one hand the letter appeared to assure De Wet that the republicans would not make peace without consulting the rebels and securing their rights; they would be treated exactly the same as burghers as far as the exchange of prisoners and compensation was concerned. On the other hand the message that Steyn encouraged the rebels to fight on could also be read into the text. It all depended on whether peace was imminent or not.⁵⁰

⁴⁶ Wessels (ed), *The Anglo-Boer War Diary of Herbert Gwynne Howell*, pp33-34; Williams, *Record of the Cape Mounted Riflemen*, pp69-71; Mullins, letter, Cory Library, MS 17.015, 12 March 1900; *South African Field Force Casualty List*, Section 1, pp101, 105 and 107.

⁴⁷ CAR, AG 2008, Part 1 Folio 1, Surrender Statement of G J Steyn of Welbedacht, Albert, 25 May 1900.

⁴⁸ Mullins, letter, Cory Library, MS 17.015, 7 March 1900; Du Plooy, *Aliwal-Noord Eenhondred Jaar*, I, pp111-112.

⁴⁹ *Grocott's Daily Mail Weekly War Summary*, 30 March 1900; Oosthuizen, *Rebelle van die Stormberge*, pp99-100.

⁵⁰ Oosthuizen, *Rebelle van die Stormberge*, p84; *Northern Post*, 29 May, 1902; CAR, AG 2010, Part 1, Special Courts, telegram to Sec of Law Department.

Van Aardt asked friends in Aliwal North for advice on his future and fled when they warned him that he might face a firing squad. Dr Luttig commented wryly on the difference between the self-assured Free State forces who had occupied the Cape Colony five months before, and the chaos, lack of discipline and the looting in their panic-stricken flight. He thought the victories of Colenso and Magersfontein had made the Boers overconfident, and when setbacks occurred they thought only of their own safety. He said that David de Wet, the ex-MLA for Aliwal North (later his father-in law) said he was sure that the Boer republics would probably have handled the war with greater skill if they had not got involved in annexing the Cape Colony.⁵¹

Steyn and the Free State Government made a strategic error in distracting themselves at the outbreak of the war by creating a mass of documentation aimed at manipulating the Cape colonists so that they could join them with a clear conscience - even down to the text of the commandeering note that had the appearance of a legal document. Albert was styled Albert, Orange Free State and the Free State flag flew over all the magistrates' courts in the occupied territory. Many colonists believed too that the occupied districts would become an independent state, or they would be represented in the Free State *Volksraad* when the war was over.⁵²

Steyn's expediency and manipulation of the Cape rebel did succeed for a while when he could have recruited staunch allies to his cause. In the aftermath of the rinderpest, the rising tide of anger in the Afrikaner community against the Cape Ministry, coupled with family loyalties, were sufficient reasons for many colonial sympathisers to join the Free Staters in order to build an Afrikaner Republic. However commandeering on a pretext hardly built long-term loyalty. The result was that Steyn, once so popular, lost support from the colonial rebels once the Free Staters withdrew across the Orange and they blamed them for leaving them in the lurch.

Rebel forces enter the Orange Free State

The rebels were bitter about Olivier's and the Free Staters' desertion, and all the more when they found that Olivier removed as much livestock and supplies from the Cape Colony as he could. The rebels who followed him were locked in an angry confrontation with the Free Staters at Beestekraal near Rouxville. Olivier was blind to the reality that the Free Staters needed all the help they could get to continue the war. According to Pieter Roux of Toomnek, Dordrecht he threatened to shoot them like dogs if they turned back. After a day or more of quarrelling many rebels returned to the Cape Colony, while only a few, including himself and Cmdt Danie Schoeman, followed Olivier.⁵³

⁵¹ Luttig, 'Mediese Loopbaan van Dr P Luttig', Fransie Pienaar Museum, p13.

⁵² CAR, Cd 261, Enclosure 10 of no 51, Further correspondence relating to South Africa, Milner to Chamberlain.

⁵³ Oosthuizen, *Rebelle van die Stormberge*, p102.

When Olivier quitted Smithfield, just ahead of his pursuers, his commando had dwindled to 150 men.⁵⁴

According to Japie Bosman, Cmdt Frans Vilonel who had replaced the wounded Cmdt Floris du Plooy at Stormberg in contrast showed genuine concern for the rebel's situation. He warned those who wanted to keep fighting that the longer they remained in the *veld*, the stiffer their punishment would be. After some debate the majority of the Albert Commando returned to Burghersdorp to lay down arms while Cmdt Petrus Steenekamp led the group of those that wanted to fight in the Free State, to Bethulie. Here they split up; those rebels who had family in the Bethulie Commando joined their relatives and the remaining 27 trekked to the Bloemfontein show grounds where they hung around, spectators in a confused situation.⁵⁵

The Albert rebels under Steenekamp, were kept away from the war because "the authorities did not think they had joined the fight with open eyes". It was only on 12 March 1900, with Lord Roberts on the outskirts of Bloemfontein, that they were called upon to take up a defensive position close to a Transvaal commando. Bosman, with Tjaart Steenekamp, probably the son of the commandant, hastily made a sangar and they sheltered in it. They discover the following dawn that they were on their when the Transvaal burghers vanished in the night. When the sangar was hit by an Armstrong gun, Bosman was nearly buried under debris. He was appalled to realize how easily the Free Staters had surrendered their capital.⁵⁶

Following the defeat of Gen Cronjé at Paardeberg an atmosphere of defeat pervaded burghers and rebels alike. All over the southern Free State burghers were laying down arms in response to Lord Roberts' surrender proclamations. Grundlingh states that 4554 burghers from the vicinity of Bloemfontein and the southern Free State districts laid down arms between the 15 March and 5 June.⁵⁷ Most of the original leaders in the rebellion surrendered, with the exception of Cmdt Hendrik Lategan of Colesberg, Cmdt Danie Schoeman of Dordrecht and Cmdt Gideon George Cronjé of Barkly East.

The names of 477 rebels from Albert, Aliwal North, Barkly East, Dordrecht, Colesberg and Wodehouse later appeared in what was referred to as an 'absconded rebel list', compiled in December 1900.⁵⁸ Absconded, in this context, meaning that these rebels had left the Cape Colony without permission. The rank and file leaderless and confused entered the Free State and wandered about in extended family groups on the fringe of the fighting. A typical case was the surrender of the Besters on 7 May 1900. Johannes Adrian Bester, senior, 59 years old, surrendered at Hoopstad together with a

⁵⁴ *Grocotts Daily Mail Weekly War Summary*, 22 March 1900.

⁵⁵ Bosman, *Slaan en Vluc*, p12.

⁵⁶ Bosman, *Slaan en Vluc*, pp13-14.

⁵⁷ Albert Grundlingh, *Die "Hendsoppers" en "Joiners"*. *Die Rasionaal en Verskynsel van Verraad*, p35.

⁵⁸ CAR, AG 2109, Absconded Rebel list.

son of the same name, aged 27, about the time virtually all the Hoopstad Commando laid down arms. The Besters gave the false address of Niekerk's Kuil, Hoopstad and were ostensibly Free Staters. However they were unable to supply the name of their Veld Cornetcy, and this led to the discovery that they were rebels from Barkly West. They spent the remainder of the war in the Simon's Town prisoner-of-war camp.⁵⁹

In contrast the Colesberg rebels under Cmdt Lategan left the Cape Colony in far better order than those under Olivier. Among them was V/C Jan van Zijl of Ebenhauser, whose wife Anna and their children accompanied him to the Colesberg Bridge in a Cape cart. The exact spot where they all said farewell and where they watched him ride off into the Free State is a special place in the family history as he never returned, explained his grandson, JP van Zijl.⁶⁰

According to Davitt, De la Rey hastened up from Colesberg with all the burghers he could muster when he received news that Cronjé was in danger of being captured at Paardeberg. The group comprising the Ficksburg, Ladybrand and Winburg burghers, were with De Wet and Philip Botha. The third Free State burgher and rebel force, which was retreating to Kroonstad, was under Gens Olivier, Lemmer and Grobler. This force, slowed by a train of 500 to 600 wagons, only reached its destination some weeks after the fall of Bloemfontein.⁶¹

The invasion of the Free State from 11 February 1900 brought chaos to the region and resulted in a confused historiography. Bradford writing in 'Gentlemen and Boers' referred to the Rimington Tigers, stating that they targeted homesteads; that at the first halt a farmhouse and African quarters were gutted and the men scrawled 'Tigers' over the front door and rode on.⁶² Trooper Percy Lukas of Rimington's writing to his sister Belle in George, threw a different light on their activities. He wrote how they had to search the Free State villages for food, horses and stock looted from the Cape Colony and abandoned when the pursuit became hot. If they did not know where the goods came from, stuff recovered was sent to the nearest military post. Among the good recovered he said that in a single day he found a horse, livestock and general supplies including two wagonloads of sugar hidden in the yard of a private house in Philippolis.⁶³

Olivier's and Grobler's Colesberg Commando, consisting of burghers and rebels, was the strongest unit remaining in the Free State after Cronjé's surrender. Davitt said, however, they found it

⁵⁹ FAR, SO/POW, see POW 7158 and POW 7157; CAR, AG 3553, gave the correct address as Pniel Barkly West. Both Besters were sent to Simon's Town.

⁶⁰ Pers com, JP van Zijl, Oudtshoorn, January 2004.

⁶¹ Michael Davitt, *The Boer Fight for Freedom*, p399, the statement that the third Free State force (given as between 5,000 and 6,000) was composed mainly of Cape Volunteers is exaggerated, the official number for absconded rebels as of December 1900, is less than 500 according to CAR, AG 2109.

⁶² Helen Bradford, 'Gentlemen and Boers: Afrikaner Nationalism, Gender, and Colonial Warfare in the South African War', in Greg Cuthbertson, Albert Grundlingh and Mary-Lynn Suttie, *Writing a Wider War*, p40.

⁶³ Percy Lukas, letters to his sister, Belle Taute, Private Archives of Errol Zondagh of Bishopslea, George, March 2000.

impossible to hold 'Roberts' legions' back. Hundreds of Free State burghers went back to their farms and it was left to the younger Boers, the rebels and the foreign brigades to do the fighting.⁶⁴

In the midst of the chaos of the movement of men into the Free State food became a desperate necessity, and everybody caught up in Roberts' march to Bloemfontein, or who was racing ahead trying not to be captured, grabbed whatever they could find to eat. Roland Shone of Avondale, Bedford, a farmer and a recruit in Nesbitt's Horse, said Gen Roberts thanked their Maj J Currie personally for ensuring that 200 wagons of food for the army had got through to Jacobsdal, as he had heard a Boer commando had snatched it. Even so the regular soldiers got quarter rations, but the colonials got nothing and Shone was told to get a Boer goat and kill it, which he did and shared with his pals.

Shone said their rations improved but were hardly interesting. He was out scouting twenty miles (32 kms) from camp sometime later when he saw a small farmhouse in the distance and decided to ask for some tea. The men with him warned him that an army order had been read out to all the regiments that anyone who interfered with Boer women would be shot. To Shone's surprise the farmer's wife begged him for food, saying that their own Boer forces had cleaned them out as they retreated and they were keeping the children alive by grinding mealies and making porridge. Shone explained to the woman that general army orders were that Boer women and children were entitled to rations. Their Commissariat officer sent a load of food to the farmhouse, he said.⁶⁵

After the fall of Bloemfontein Bosman led a wandering existence for six months, with little to do with war. He had parted from Cmdt Steenekamp (who fled to The Netherlands) at Kroonstad early in May, guarded forts in Pretoria for some weeks, and when the capital fell, trekked with a group of Cape rebels to Machadadorp. There he met President Kruger, went on a walking tour, and from June to September hunted game at Komatipoort only to contract malaria so badly that he would spend three months in the Barberton hospital.⁶⁶

The Colesberg Commando broke up after a few weeks, and those who now thought the war futile rode back to the Cape Colony and 78 rebels surrendered between 22 and 24 March 1900 at Philippolis. It was clear that they had been under investigation for some time and the magistrate accepted the surrender of 52 rebels, classified them as Class 2 rebels and allowed them to return to their farms. Thirteen others appeared in court at Naauwpoort on 11 April and were allowed out on bail pending further investigation. Hendrik R Vorster of Derdepoort, Peter and Barend H Swart of Colesberg, and Frederick L van Dragt of Blaauwkrantz became awaiting trial prisoners at

⁶⁴ Davitt, *The Boer Fight for Freedom*, pp407-408.

⁶⁵ RD Shone, 'Diary of Roland Dudley Shone', p3, Private archives of RK Shone, Avondale, Bedford.

⁶⁶ Bosman, *Slaan en Vluc*, pp17-24.

Naauwpoort. Joseph Snyman was moved to Philipstown to await trial on a murder charge. Information is lacking on five of the rebels.⁶⁷

Olivier's Commando operated under Gens De Wet and Prinsloo for three months falling back steadily into the northeast Free State under pressure from the advancing British columns. Gen Hunter's forces later surrounded a large number of Boers that had retired towards the Wittebergen Hills in the Brandwater Basin. Subsequently Gen De Wet and President Steyn, with 1,500 men broke through the cordon, leaving behind Prinsloo with 4,500 burghers and Cape rebels, who decided to surrender - except for Olivier and his two sons who slipped away at the last moment.⁶⁸ Six days later thousands of Boer fighters laid down arms at Ficksburg and Fouriesburg. Among them were nineteen Albert rebels who, fearful of being identified as Cape rebels, gave false addresses, claiming to be from Smithfield, Bethulie, Rouxville or Reitz, anywhere but Albert or Aliwal North.⁶⁹ They were sent to Ceylon as Free State POWs, but eventually anxious relatives informed each other of the whereabouts of lost family members, never imagining that the postal censors reported the information and revealed their identities.⁷⁰

Rebels then regrouped under Cmdt Hendrik Lategan and fought on when many Free Staters had laid down arms. Lategan's Commando became part of the defensive action along the main railway line to the north as the Boers fell back before Lord Roberts' advance. During April and May they formed part of the Boer forces in action along the eastern boundary. Rumours abounded that the Cape rebel was fighting with a noose around his neck. That and the terror of going to gaol probably led to so many concealing their home addresses.

According to the German Official History the number of men under arms at the end of May 1900 was as follows; the Transvaal forces numbered 25,411, the Free Staters were 14,843, there were 8,923 "other inhabitants of both states mixed with the commandos", 2,359 Cape colonists and 734 foreigners in corps of between 25 to 200 men. The total was 52,270⁷¹ The situation was fluid in May 1900 as Vryburg and Mafeking were retaken; whether these figures take the surrender of those rebels into account is not known.

Cmdt Lategan and his men took part in the weeklong engagement at Dalmanutha in the eastern Transvaal. President Steyn's laager of 250 men on the Crocodile River fell under Lategan's

⁶⁷ FAR, Volume A 245, HH Harmsworth, List of Colonial subjects who surrendered at Philippolis on 23 March 1900.

⁶⁸ Malan, *Boere Offisiere*, p48; Davitt, *Boer Fight for Freedom*, p449; FAR, SO/POW, Gen Jan Hendrik Olivier, POW 11569, captured 27 August 1900.

⁶⁹ FAR, In the general SO/POW list there are surprisingly few Cape Rebels for 1900. It is only when AG 3558 'Register of Cape Rebels who are POWs' is consulted that the numbers of Cape Rebels who gave false addresses after capture becomes obvious.

⁷⁰ CAR, AG 2008, Part 2 Folio 40, Absconded Rebel re Danie Roux's arrival at Peniche, Portugal.

⁷¹ General Staff, Berlin, *The German Official Account of the War in South Africa*, October 1988 to February 1900, p19 fn.

control, and he accompanied Steyn when he visited President Kruger at Machadadorp.⁷² At Komatipoort OT de Villiers, a Paarl rebel who had deserted the Western Province Mounted Rifles, met up with Lategan, Willie Hofmeyr and V/C Jan van Zijl, all of Colesberg.⁷³ He heard President Steyn urge his followers once more not to be downhearted; and he promised that as far as the 'colonial brothers' were concerned, peace would not be signed without their freedom being assured.⁷⁴ Reassured that their future was secure in Steyn's hands, the rebels fought on. Lategan and his men acted as bodyguards to Steyn when he returned to the Orange Free State. Among them was Bosman, who said they had left their horses behind at Machadadorp, as they had died of horse sickness, and they walked back all the way behind Steyn's wagon.

Return to the Free State

To avoid British forces, the commando took a huge detour through the northern Transvaal, trekking as far north as Pietersburg where they met up with Gen De la Rey in the vicinity of Rustenburg, who escorted them to the Free State.⁷⁵ Steyn met up with Gen De Wet again on 31 October 1900 near Ventersdorp where they joined Gen CC Froneman's commando.⁷⁶ On 6 November 1900 the Boers and rebels under Lategan laagered at Doornkraal near Bothaville. At this stage many rebels were quite exhausted from the incessant walking, according to OT de Villiers. They were still asleep when they were surprised at dawn by a force under Lieut-Col PWJ le Gallais and fighting erupted in the farmhouse, around the dam wall and a kraal where 80 unmounted Boers were captured. De Wet wrote later they could have made a stand if some of the men had not panicked.⁷⁷ Lategan's losses were V/C Jan van Zijl of Colesberg and Ben Pienaar of Uitenhage killed, and 48 rebels were captured, including Cmdt George Cronjé of Barkly East. A total of 35 of rebel prisoners were sent to Ceylon.⁷⁸

The rebels captured at Bothaville came from all over the northeastern Cape, indicating that Lategan had become the *de facto* rebel leader in the Free State.⁷⁹ Lategan escaped with 120 men, and

⁷² DS van Warmelo, *On Commando*, p72.

⁷³ De Villiers, *Met De Wet en Steyn in het Veld*, p23; CAR, D/D 4/173, Enrolment list of Western Province Mounted Rifles, 17 January 1901; NAR, FK 795, Milner to Kitchener, 25 March, 1901 states De Villiers deserted from SA Light Horse.

⁷⁴ De Villiers, *Met De Wet en Steyn in het Veld*, p35.

⁷⁵ Bosman. *Slaan en Vlug*, pp25-28.

⁷⁶ Wessels (ed), *Anglo-Boer War, Diary of Herbert Gwynne Howell*, p78.

⁷⁷ Amery (eds), *The Times History*, V, pp15-21 states British casualties were 38 killed and wounded and the Boers seventeen killed and 100 captured; Christiaan Rudolf de Wet, *The Three Years War (October 1899-June 1902)*, p216; De Villiers, *Met De Wet and Steyn in het Veld*, p45.

⁷⁸ FAR, Renier Collection, 119.139 8723 letter from Martiens Havinga of Colesberg, 18 November 1949.

⁷⁹ MCE van Schoor, in collaboration with PJ Delport, E Wessels, H Ferreira, and BK Schoeman, *Die Bannelinge: ABO-Boerekrygsgevangenes 1899-1902*, p6.

joined De Wet's expedition to the south, playing a part in the evacuation of Dewetsdorp on 23 November 1900. He was still fighting under De Wet at the end of the year who he was planning an invasion of the Cape Colony.⁸⁰

Kheis Island and Fabersputs

Returning to the rebellion in the northwest Cape after the Free Staters withdrew from Upington and Prieska, about 24 Gordonia rebels trekked with their families and livestock to Kheis Island on the Orange River, west of Prieska. Their leader was a Jewish shopkeeper, Herman Judelewitz, and there were three prisoners-of-war, Maritz, Bosman and Van Rooyen, who had escaped from the Simon's Town POW camp. On 28 May 1900 Col Adye surprised the laager, his forces killing Judelewitz and capturing an unknown number of rebels and their families, livestock, arms and ammunition. In a second skirmish at the drift to Kheis the rebels defeated the Warwick Yeomanry, killed Maj Orr Ewing and two others. The rebels had wounded the doctor attending to Ewing and the troopers were forced to abandon an attempt to rescue a man swept away in the current when they came under heavy fire.⁸¹

Lieut-Gen Sir Charles Warren was ordered to secure Douglas, Campbell, Griquatown and Kuruman. His force consisted of Imperial Yeomanry and the Duke of Edinburgh's Own Volunteer Rifles (DEOVR), plus Canadians led by Lieut-Col Sam Hughes, who had driven the rebels out of Upington.⁸² At the end of May Warren camped at Fabersputs and waited for supplies. De Villiers attacked the camp,⁸³ and killed 26 of Warren's force, notably Lieut-Col WA Spence of the DEOVR.⁸⁴ Rebels killed were Gert Agenbach, Theunis Britz JJ/son, Willem Burger, Gert Cloete, Abraham Jan de Klerk, Frank Desbe, Willem Monk, Petrus Muller snr, Alwyn Petrus Smith, Jacobus Swanepoel, Liep Swiegers, Jacobus van der Westhuizen and Johannes Weideman R/son.⁸⁵ De Villiers was praised for his daring, the Volunteers for standing their ground, and Warren was criticised for not taking precautions to see that his camp was not surprised.⁸⁶ De Villiers with 300 rebels from Herbert and Hay was reported to be ready to surrender at Kuruman. Warren sent Hughes over, but warned him on no account to approach the laager or to negotiate terms of surrender. Hughes ignored the order and captured over 220 rebels at Koning and Blikfontein. When Warren arrived he found that Hughes had given generous terms to the rebels, but De Villiers, Jan Vorster and 50 top fighters had vanished into

⁸⁰ DW Kruger and CJ Beyers (eds), *Dictionary of South African Biography*, III, pp498-499.

⁸¹ *Grocott's Daily Mail Weekly War Summary*, 31 May 1900.

⁸² Reid, *Our Little Army in the Field*, p86.

⁸³ See Chapter 5.

⁸⁴ Snyman, 'Postmasburg en die Tweede Vryheidsoorlog', *Military History Journal*, p204-208.

⁸⁵ Lotter, *Uit de Oorlog*, 'Weer zo wat van Fabersputs', pp17-19.

⁸⁶ Amery (ed), *The Times History*, II, pp234-235.

the Transvaal, where they joined Gen De la Rey. Vorster decided to fight under Gen Liebenberg and was captured on 29 July 1900 near Potchefstroom and went to Ceylon under the alias of Jan Retief from Johannesburg.⁸⁷

At this time Hughes' indiscreet letters to friends, blaming the British for incompetence appeared in Canadian papers. Warren was furious at De Villiers' disappearance. Hughes was in hot water and Lord Roberts dispensed with his services, but his terms to the rebels stood.⁸⁸ Warren restored peace for a short time. Postmasburg changed hands and a local loyalist, Thomas Green, a volunteer in Warren's Scouts, was put in charge of the village. Postmasburg was in a bad way due to the rinderpest and now, due to the war, conditions deteriorated even further. The leaders of the rebellion were indicted, and some of them were allowed out on bail.⁸⁹

Vryburg falls and Mafeking is relieved

Although Kimberley was relieved in mid-February by Gen French, the British outpost remained for some time only six miles (ten kms) north of the diamond fields at Osfontein, and frequent skirmishes were reported east of the Koedoesrand, north towards the Modder, and around Petrusburg, which remained in Boer hands for a few weeks.⁹⁰

Remnants of the Griqualand West Commando, mostly Vryburg and Kuruman rebels, had laagered on a series of ridges at Rooidam, not far from Fourteen Streams, blocking the route to the north. A column under Col TB Mahon left Kimberley on 4 May, determined to relieve Mafeking. Maj Barton drove the Vryburg and Kuruman rebels off, and among the fatalities was Cmdt Baart van Aswegen of Barkly West.⁹¹ On 11 May 1900 the column arrived in Vryburg and arrested prominent rebels fleeing to the Transvaal, and took them on to Mafeking, from where they were sent to Cape Town via Beira, while others reached the border with their families and their belongings. Large quantities of arms were seized when Gen Hunter arrived in Vryburg, and rebels who had surrendered were allowed to return to their farms until summoned by the Magistrate.⁹²

When rumours reached the rebel laager at Rietfontein in May 1900 that a British column was set to relieve Mafeking, David de Koker and about eighteen others fled to the Transvaal but over the following months they were nearly all captured and sent to camps in Ceylon and India. Mafeking was relieved on 17 May 1900 after a siege lasting 216 days. After the rejoicings were over a public

⁸⁷ J Vorster, 'Kommandant Jan Vorster, alias Jan Pieter Retief, Kaapse Rebel', in *Military History Journal*, VII, No 4, December, 1987, pp146-147.

⁸⁸ Reid, *Our Little Army in the Field*, pp89-90.

⁸⁹ Snyman, 'Postmasburg en die Tweede Vryheidsoorlog', p206.

⁹⁰ *Grocott's Daily Mail Weekly War Summary*, 3 March 1900.

⁹¹ CAR, AG 2016, Folio 48 re Van Aswegen; Amery (ed), *The Times History*, IV, p218.

⁹² *Cape Times Weekly Edition*, 'Warrenton', 27 May, Reuters Special Service.

meeting was held in the town on 30 May to discuss the "Future of the Republics and the treatment of rebels".⁹³ The relieving forces made a clean sweep of the farms in the Mafeking district, and the rebels that remained in the vicinity were arrested and gaoled while undergoing preliminary investigation. The surrender of a number of Class 2 rebels was accepted, and some of them were allowed to join the Bechuanaland Rifles and served with the SA Field Force for the remainder of the conflict. Five Mafeking rebels only laid down arms at the end of the war.⁹⁴

Lukas Groenewald of Zoutfontein, Vryburg, said that only a few of the Vryburg men remained on commando once the news of Lord Roberts' surrender terms spread. The terms were that any man who wanted to surrender would be allowed free and safe passage to his home. Many laid down arms. Those who stayed in the field begged the others to give them their good Mausers and hand the old ones to the English instead. When they refused to hand them over, Groenewald said they got so angry that they fired at their former companions, who then escaped during the night. The few who would not give up the fight trekked over the frontier and fought under Cmdt CM Douthwaite with the Transvalers.⁹⁵

Refugees

Kruger had long feared that the British Government would punish captured rebels harshly, especially those who once held official positions under the Colonial Government. As early as February 1900 he ordered a former Cape Policemen, Solomon Johannes Oosthuizen of Burghersdorp, to move to Pretoria, as he feared that he could be executed if he were captured. Melt Marais, on behalf of the Transvaal Government, offered rebels a free passage to Europe, plus £75 for expenses, and Jotham Joubert, MLA for Albert, and Ignatius van der Walt, MLA for Colesberg, were among those who took advantage of the scheme. Not everybody wanted to go. Guiliam Andries Schoombie, of Wagenmakersvlei, Steynsburg refused the passage money, and became a despatch rider for De Wet instead.⁹⁶

Other refugees fled by train in open trucks to the Transvaal. However Benning's statement that a caravan of over 6,000 refugees arrived in Pretoria on 5 April from the Cape Colony is exaggerated as Bechuanaland and Vryburg in Griqualand West were still in Boer hands as Mafeking was only relieved on 16 May.⁹⁷ On 18 May 1900 erstwhile leaders such as Joubert, MLA for Albert,

⁹³ *Mafeking Mail*, 30 May 1900.

⁹⁴ FAR, SO/POW, List of Prisoners of War at Natal, DM de Koker, No 17095, captured 16 February, 1901; CAR, AG 2116, Lists of Persons convicted of High Treason under Act 100 of 1902.

⁹⁵ Bottomley, 'Anglo-Boer War reminiscences of LJ Groenewald', p3.

⁹⁶ FAR, Renier Versameling, 129.127, Letter by H Martins, nd.

⁹⁷ OJO Ferreira, *Viva Os Boers! Boeregeïnterneerdes in Portugal tydens die Anglo-Boereoorlog 1899-1902*, p24; CAR, AG 2109, List of absconded rebels.

Van der Walt, MLA for Colesberg, Cmdt Piet Steenekamp and Rev JD (Totius) du Toit sailed with other rebel colonists on the *Bundesrath* as exiles to The Netherlands.⁹⁸

By 16 September 1900, 3,000 men, mainly foreign volunteers and Cape rebels under Gen FJ Pienaar, were in the vicinity of Komatiepoort. Of the 3,000 that crossed into Portuguese territory, 2,000 were without horses, destitute, or had contracted malaria.⁹⁹ Delagoa Bay was rife with disease, and accommodation and food were very scarce. The Netherlands Red Cross ran a tent hospital and volunteers cared for a never-ending stream of patients. Christoffel Rudolph Annandale of Annan Water, Wodehouse, who assisted the overburdened staff, was commended for his work. Among those who died of disease in Delagoa Bay was Jan Albertus Kroukamp (20) of Vryburg who died on 8 January 1901.¹⁰⁰

Due to the unhealthy conditions and the shortage of housing, the Portuguese authorities decided to ship the internees to camps in Portugal. Among the 153 Cape rebels were thirteen married men with their families. Another 129 colonists that also sailed for Portugal had lived in the Boer republics for some while and had not taken part in the rebellion in the Cape Colony.¹⁰¹ A group with private funds went to the United States of America, including Philip Wege of Aliwal North, who studied dentistry and later returned in 1906 to practise in the Transvaal.¹⁰²

Rebels surrender

The majority of the rebels under arms south of the Orange River decided to return home during March 1900 hoping they would all get off lightly. Clutching their Free State commandeering letters, they came in to surrender. For some the crux came after they read a telegram from Lord Roberts to Brabant, pasted on the Frere Bridge at Aliwal North. Newspapers reported that Gatacre had recalled a proclamation issued by Brabant on 22 February 1900, but issued another proclamation asking the rebels to surrender and give up their arms, and they would receive passes to go to their farms, where they were to remain until called to account later.¹⁰³ Both proclamations were aimed at getting the rebel home and subdued under Martial Law in order to leave the army time to mop up the legitimate belligerents of the Orange Free State and the Transvaal.

In the turmoil that followed the rebels surrendered in family groups, as they had gone on commando - the head of the family having the say. Hundreds of Aliwal North rebels began laying down arms before the Magistrate, JD Hugo, who, back at his post, was giving written permission for

⁹⁸ Venter, 'Jotham Joubert: Profiel van 'n Kaapse Rebel', p337.

⁹⁹ Amery (ed), *The Times History*, IV, pp476 and 483.

¹⁰⁰ Ferreira, *Viva Os Boers!*, pp56,58.

¹⁰¹ CAR, AG 2106, Folio 38, Return of Rebels in June 1903; Ferreira, *Viva Os Boers!*, pp242-261.

¹⁰² Luttig, 'Mediese Loopbaan van Dr P Luttig', p15.

them to return to their farms, which they were not to leave on pain of being arrested. Of the 44 Class 1 rebels, about five followed the Free Staters, and two of these were later interned in Portugal.¹⁰⁴ Of the 23 leading Wodehouse rebels eighteen surrendered. Of the eighteen Colesberg Class 1 rebels, who were fewer in number than those that fought at Stormberg, about ten continued to fight in the Free State and Transvaal. On 17 March 1900 300 Albert rebels surrendered in a single day and left for their farms, clutching their passes. Lord Wolwer-ton, representing Gen Brabant, informed them patronisingly at Burghersdorp,

"You have been guilty of a great crime for which, in any other country, you would have been shot. But the great British General, Lord Roberts, with the sanction of Her Most Gracious Majesty the Queen, has dealt leniently with you, knowing you are ignorant men and have been misled. Your leaders will be called to account. You are to go home and remain there, and by your future conduct try and expiate the great harm done."¹⁰⁵

At Lady Grey a colonial Field Cornet, Mr Edward Sterley, had persuaded the wavering local rebels to lay down arms and then asked Maj Hook at Herschel for assistance. Hook said the Lady Grey rebels had grown weary of the war and were surrendering steadily to the local loyalists. He received a further report that rebels at Barkly East were prepared to surrender. Maj Hook, escorted by seven police and a telegraphist, rode over. The reoccupation of Barkly East took place in a festive mood. The Free State officials remained to hand over the keys of the courthouse, and rebels poured in to surrender. By 14 March 1900 over 1,000 first class arms had been handed over.¹⁰⁶

Of course the Magistrates all complained of the parlous state of their divisions when they returned to their villages after the Free State withdrawal in March 1900. If the long-suffering British citizens reproached them for their flight in November 1899, nothing of this was mentioned officially by the magistrates in their reports made on their return. The appalling state of the Residencies and the mess and chaos of the Magistrate's Courts were widely commented on. Kidwell at Jamestown said it was July 1900 before business began to resume its normal condition.¹⁰⁷ The general complaint was that trade had been suspended, many commodities were short; crops were not gathered properly as the men were away, roads were neglected and stock had not been attended to. At Griquatown the health of the people was poor as malaria was prevalent, but there was no medicine to treat them. At Douglas it was reported that when the Free State forces left the rebels reined supreme, were arrogant and oppressive. Offences committed by blacks were punishable by lashes. The rebel officials were chosen from the better classes. The rank and file of the rebels were squatters and labourers. The only

¹⁰³ *Grocott's Daily Mail Weekly War Summary*, 'Dordrecht', 8 March 1900.

¹⁰⁴ *Grocott's Daily Mail Weekly War Summary*, 'Reuter's Special War Service, Aliwal North', 13 March 1900.

¹⁰⁵ *Grocott's Daily Mail Weekly War Summary*, 'Reuter's Special Service', 17 March 1900.

¹⁰⁶ Hook, *With Sword and Statute*, pp382-389.

¹⁰⁷ Alexander James Kidwell, 'The Boer War', Cory Library, Ms 11.002.

magistrate who mentioned the reaction of the women when the rebellion came to an end, was from Prieska; he said that the women understood only too well the result of their husbands' rebellion; ruination to the family and severe punishment of their husbands. At Griquatown Landdrost Perry performed three marriages and entered them into the register.¹⁰⁸

AJ Kidwell, Special Justice of the police, returned to Jamestown in March 1900 after an enforced absence of four months. He was accompanied by a force of 600 Volunteers and officers to assist him, and accepted the surrender of 150 men, whom he described as 'forlorn and dejected'. Kidwell interviewed the rebels, making a preliminary examination. He sent them each home with a permit giving them permission to return to their farms. The rebels had to remain there and not leave without an order that was signed by the Resident Magistrate or Special Justice of the Peace.¹⁰⁹

The suddenness of the collapse of the rebellion caught Milner and the weak Colonial Government unprepared. Milner wrote to Chamberlain at the end of March, saying that administrative chaos had arisen from the conflict of civil and military authorities, the latter trying to suppress rebellion and the former to screen rebels, as well as from the eternal chopping and changing by the military themselves. Milner spent five days trying to introduce some uniformity into the procedure. The procedures of the Chief of Staff's circulars of 30 January and 3 February were being followed. It would take time to get through the preliminaries, which would give plenty of opportunity to consider the best form of tribunal for the final trials, he said.¹¹⁰ The sheer numbers of rebels to be processed, over 5,000 by May 1900, increased clerical difficulties.

Martial Law circulars of January and February 1900 stated that where Martial Law was in force persons resisting the authority of the Government, or aiding and abetting the enemy, were to be arrested and punished. The offences under Martial Law included treasonable or seditious acts, enlisting or engaging in the military forces of the enemy, aiding or abetting the enemy, or voluntarily carrying on trade or supplying goods to the enemy; destroying railways, bridges or telegraphs and endangering the safety, or hampering the movements of Her Majesty's forces. Fines could be imposed and persons removed from a proclaimed district to another.¹¹¹

Class 1 and Class 2 rebels

From the end of March rebels were divided into two classes. Class 1 was defined as the ringleaders and those who had been actively engaged in assisting the enemy, or in planning and

¹⁰⁸ CAR, CCP 1/2/1/111 Magistrate's Report of the invasion of the Cape Colony by Free State forces.

¹⁰⁹ Kidwell, 'The Boer War', *The Boer War* – through the eyes of AJ Kidwell – the founder of Jamestown, p14.

¹¹⁰ Headlam, *The Milner Papers*, II, p106.

¹¹¹ CAR, Cd 981, Papers relating to the administration of Martial Law in South Africa, Chief of Staff's circular of 30 January and Memorandum No 7 of 3 February 1900.

propagating rebellion in the Cape Colony, or had held a position under the Colonial Government. Class 1 offenders were to be arrested, preliminary investigations were to be held and a record of evidence sent to the General Officer Commanding (GOC) Cape Town.¹¹² Hundreds of people were gaoled, and 29 leaders of the Aliwal North rebellion alone were lodged in the Queenstown Gaol. They included the Mayor, NE Smuts, the ex-MLA member, David de Wet, and three field cornets, JH Lubbe, AJ Fourie and Hendrik Naude. The myth arose later that rebels were convicted and sentenced to long prison terms on the strength of the fabricated evidence given by ignorant blacks and Cape coloureds. In reality the dubious method of commandeering men and forcing them into the laagers now came back to haunt those in the dock. A long drawn-out process, beginning with a preliminary investigation by the local magistrate, commenced in the northeastern Cape.

The English press in every part of South Africa took up the subject of the mistaken kindness to rebels by Lord Roberts, and with the exception of those few papers that sympathised with the rebels, there was a unanimous outcry for the employment of more drastic measures in dealing with those found guilty of treason.¹¹³ The military had little to say officially against the Schreiner ministry after Mafeking was relieved. Not so the *Mafeking Mail* that had given a great deal of space to all the messages of congratulations received from all over the world, starting with a message from Queen Victoria. No message came from the Prime Minister. The *Mafeking Mail* said they did not want a message from him. About WP Schreiner they said sharply "we always regard him as a man with no knowledge of men, and therefore easily misled and made the tool and puppet of astute plotters Mafeking wants no communication with a man who either wilfully corrupt or stupidly befooled, was equally guilty of endangering his country's interest".¹¹⁴

An extraordinary number of affidavits were recorded implicating Class 1 suspects. Among the nineteen affidavits collected against Johannes Hendrik Lubbe of Driefontein, Aliwal North was a sworn statement by L James, manager of Bailey and Co, Jamestown that Lubbe was Deputy Commandant of a group of rebels. He first selected a spot near the location at Jamestown for his camp, but because of rumours moved it to Witkop, near Jamestown. HG Pelsler stated that there were about 100 rebels in the camp. Lubbe was a candidate for election as commandant of the Aliwal North forces, but Van Aardt was eventually elected, said Jacob Venter who deposed that A Wagenaar, the acting Magistrate, held the election in the presence of 100 rebels. Six witnesses saw Lubbe armed at Stormberg according to numerous sworn statements.¹¹⁵

¹¹² CAR, Cd 981, Memoranda, Inspector General Lines of Communication, 31 March 1900, Chief of Staff's Confidential Circular No 9.

¹¹³ *Grocott's Daily Mail Weekly War Summary*, 25 April 1900.

¹¹⁴ *Mafeking Mail*, 30 May 1900, 'Congratulations'.

¹¹⁵ CAR, AG 3388, Preliminary Investigation into charges of High Treason of Johannes Hendrik Lubbe of Driefontein, Aliwal North. Indicted as a prominent and active leader in the rebellion who served as Deputy Commandant.

In the inquiry into Christian van der Merwe of Osso, Lady Grey it came to light that the accused was appointed a Veld Cornet and Corporal under the Orange Free State Government and bore arms at Stormberg, Dordrecht, Jamestown and Labuschagnesnek. He was accused of being leader and spokesmen of the rebels who arrested F Gedye at Lady Grey and forced him to surrender his keys. He took possession of the stock of police clothing at Rooinek. He arrested the Cape Police on duty at Labuschagnesnek and took them to Cmdt Olivier who took their arms, horses and saddlery. Van der Merwe retreated with the Free State forces, but afterwards surrendered. Among the many affidavits implicating him was one from Gordon Harris, later private of the Dordrecht District Volunteer Guard, who said that Van der Merwe had 25 men under him when he arrived at Rooinek. He carried a black waterproof that he said he took from an English officer at Stormberg.¹¹⁶

After a preliminary hearing at the end of March 1900 an indictment was also prepared against Peter Jacobus de Wet, a member of the Legislative Assembly and farmer of Waschbank, Wodehouse. He was charged with taking up arms and joining the military forces of the republics, and acting as a member of a Court that dealt with prisoners captured by the Military forces of the republics. He also wrongfully communicated with the President of the Orange Free State and forced a member of the Cape Police to join the Military forces of the Boer Republics. An affidavit came in from James Louw who had met Pony de Wet on the Kraai River Bridge, and said he was taking his family to the Free State for safety as the English troops had entered Dordrecht. De. Wet showed him the letter he had received from President Steyn, said Louw.¹¹⁷

There were three charges in the indictment against Johannes Francois de Wet of Mosheshsford, Barkly East. They were that he joined the military forces of the republics at Stormberg and that he assisted in levying war at Stormberg and at Wodehouse and elsewhere; that he acted in the capacity of a Veld Cornet, and that he advised JP Jenkins, a private in the Cape Police, to join the military forces of the republics.¹¹⁸

When the statements against Class 1 rebels are studied there is considerable *prima facie* evidence. It is difficult however to find explanations on what motivated the leaders of the rebellion. Theophilus Tylden Shepstone, a special Justice of the Peace in Rhodes does shed some light. He said that when Cmdt Olivier arrived at Rhodes he watched Hugo, a teacher, handing out papers to various people and heard that he was commandeering them. Shepstone said he went around and warned the Dutch that the day would come when they would shed tears over their disloyalty, but the majority of

¹¹⁶ CAR, AG 3388, Preliminary Investigation of Christian Petrus van der Merwe, of Osso, Lady Grey. He was eventually found guilty in April 1902 and sentenced to one year's imprisonment and a fine of £500 or a further one year imprisonment.

¹¹⁷ CAR, AG 3388, Indictment against PL de Wet, MLA. A large number of Aliwal North rebels including David de Wet and their families were sent to Beaufort West where they were out on bail until the end of the war.

¹¹⁸ CAR, AG 3391, Indictment against Johannes F de Wet of Mosheshsford, Barkly East.

those who joined the Free Staters were under the impression that the English had no chance. Shepstone then suggested that people might hand in their names to him so that if they were pressed into the Free State service the list might avail them in the end. The Dutch would not sign a list, but some men did come forward and say they would do nothing except under strong pressure. Shepstone also stated that some people were afraid they would be shot by British troops if they crossed over the borders into the Barkly East district.¹¹⁹

The same standard of care by the Clerks of the Magistrate's Office to collect incontrovertible evidence is seen in documents relating to these preliminary hearings of Class 1 rebels. All Class 1 rebels (whose preliminary investigations were completed) were released on bail, except for Members of War Committees, Members of Municipalities and Divisional Councils, Justices of the Peace and Field or Assistant Field Cornets.¹²⁰

The Class 2 rebels were the rank and file who had been commandeered, or otherwise induced to join the enemy, or had taken up arms against the Government unwillingly. Class 2 offenders were sent home after lists had been compiled, and statements were sent to the GOC Cape Town.¹²¹ These surrendered rebels, who now carried permits allowing them to return to their farms, were only allowed to visit their nearest market town by a direct route in order to sell their goods, to buy necessities, or to attend *Nachtmaal*. On arrival in town they had to report to the Magistrate, who issued a permit for them to return home. No rebel living in town was allowed to leave it without a permit. There was a general curfew between 10pm and 5am, when everybody had to be indoors. All letters had to be scrutinised by the censor before being posted.¹²²

Many farmers returned home knowing full well that as things stood they would never collect payment for livestock commandeered by the Free State forces. The Aliwal North farmers could have appropriated the livestock the Free Staters had driven over the Orange River to get better grazing. However under Martial Law the Army Transport Department soon made a clean sweep, collecting up all the Free State livestock for their own use. In May, according to Memoranda No 4, the stock of rebels who had absconded or were under arrest and admitted to bail was auctioned, and payment made to the Field Paymaster. The receipt went to the Magistrate so that the information would be available for the Commissioners appointed to deal with compensation. The regulations for the auction of stock were amended in July, and a new ruling was introduced that sufficient livestock to maintain the families should be left on the farms.¹²³

¹¹⁹ CAR, AG 3391, File of Johannes F de Wet, Mosheshsford, Barkly East. Statement about G Hugo, signed by TT Shepstone on 23 February 1901.

¹²⁰ CAR, Cd 981, Inspector-General's circular Memorandum, Nos 16 and 17, July 1900. It stated that older men producing Medical Certificates would be admitted to bail.

¹²¹ *Grocott's Daily Mail Weekly War Summary*, 21 April 1900.

¹²² Du Plooy, *Aliwal Noord, Eenhonderd Jaar*, I, pp114-115.

¹²³ CAR, Cd 981, Inspector-General's circular Memorandum, Nos 2, 3 and 4, 9 May to 9 July 1900.

A game of cat and mouse developed between the authorities and the colonists as the army tried to call the rebels to heel. In April 1900 Lord Roberts issued a proclamation reminding the inhabitants of Albert, Steynsburg, Molteno, Wodehouse, Aliwal North, Barkly East and Colesberg that he had treated them with great leniency, as, with the exception of the ringleaders, he had allowed them to return to their farms. He then warned those who joined or assisted the enemy that if they committed any further acts of hostility they (themselves or their property) would be treated with the utmost rigour, and the extreme penalties of Martial Law would be enforced against them.¹²⁴

However the proclamations issued by Lord Roberts, although widely publicised, really had little bearing on the thorny issue of a suitable punishment for surrendered rebels. The legal crux of the matter was that the Cape rebel was a British citizen, and as the Cape of Good Hope enjoyed responsible government, it was the Cape Parliament's duty to promulgate legislation, which would be handed down to rebels convicted of High Treason by the justice system.

Because it was a crown colony, the Schreiner ministry could not disregard the advice of the Secretary of State. In April 1900 Chamberlain had put pressure on the colonial ministry, requesting them to pay compensation for losses sustained by loyalists as a result of the invasion or rebellion. Schreiner supported by the Attorney General, Richard Solomon, firmly resisted, stating they had no money and could only deal with cases covered by their own proclamation.¹²⁵

Crisis in the Schreiner Ministry

The Schreiner ministry was to split on the thorny issue of an appropriate punishment for the Cape rebel. When 5,000 rebels surrendered it became obvious that the office of the Cape Attorney General lacked the organisation to process these numbers. Both Ministries agreed to the appointment of a statutory Special Judicial Commission that should visit the districts under Martial Law to hear the cases. In the meanwhile preparatory examination of suspects by magistrates could proceed, and this could later be validated once the Commission was established.¹²⁶

The crisis developed after a Draft of the Amnesty Minute by the Treasurer, John X Merriman, was signed by the Cabinet and submitted to the Governor. In it the Ministers submitted that justice would be served if a limited number of principal offenders were brought to trial in order that the punishment act as a general deterrent for rebellion. For the remainder of the rebels the Queen was asked to issue a Proclamation of Amnesty. The ministers supported the petition by referring to the

¹²⁴ CAR, Cd 426, Proclamations of Lord Roberts, No 8 Army Headquarters, Bloemfontein, 9 April 1900.

¹²⁵ Walker, *WP Schreiner, A South African*, pp224-225.

¹²⁶ CAR, Cd 264, Correspondence relating to the Affairs of the Cape Colony, Minute 1/33, Enclosure 1 in No 6, Governor to Ministers, 14 April 1900.

amnesty issued in Lower Canada after a rebellion in 1837 and 1838.¹²⁷ However Attorney General Solomon pointed out to Schreiner that according to colonial law a person convicted of treason lost his vote permanently. There was another danger, he said, that if the loyalists saw ex-rebels voting, they would agitate for the suspension of the constitution. But the Secretary of State, who had agreed to a judicial commission to try the rebels, pointed out that he had to balance clemency to the rebels against justice to the loyalist, and insisted that the law must take its course and the rebels be disfranchised. Solomon, concerned that the judicial process could either break down completely or go on for years, suggested a compromise in which the rebel rank and file be disfranchised for five years.¹²⁸

The ministerial crisis deepened with Schreiner, Solomon and Herholdt, Secretary for Agriculture, on one hand, realising that a compromise on the amnesty issue was the best they could hope for, and the remainder of the Cabinet, led by Merriman, refusing to agree to the measure.¹²⁹ There are other aspects of Merriman's demand for the total amnesty which were not looked at, but which played a part in their demand; the Schreiner ministries so-called neutral policy had greatly provoked the rebellion, and of course Merriman would then have to fight the next election with a reduced voting base, so he was also fighting to keep the rebels on the voters' roll. Hofmeyr of the Afrikaner Bond, well aware that his supporters would be kept from the polls, wrote to Schreiner that if "such a vindictive measure of political partisanship be taken as disfranchising hundreds, or it may mean thousands, of Dutch Afrikaners, thereby completely changing the Parliamentary balance of power, it would create for years to come a class of Dutch helots". Hofmeyr insisted that if the members of the Schreiner Ministry refused to give way on the issue, Chamberlain should permit a blanket amnesty.¹³⁰

Hofmeyr was present at a meeting of the SA Party caucus on 8 June 1900 and the Indemnity Bill for deeds done under Martial Law and the establishment of a Special Tribunal to try rebel ringleaders was passed. Schreiner's proposal that the rank and file be disfranchised for five years was defeated by 29 votes to 8. Hoping to break the impasse, the Ministry contacted the Secretary of State again about the length of disfranchisement, but from his reply it was obvious that he too would not compromise. Schreiner resigned four days later and the crisis remained unresolved.¹³¹

It is difficult to assess the effect of the resignation of the Schreiner Ministry on the Cape rebel. The rebel on commando in the Free State, whether a voter, a non-voter or a youngster not yet

¹²⁷ Lewsen (ed), *Selection from the Correspondence of JX Merriman, 1899-1905*, pp192-194, Merriman's Draft of Amnesty Minute, Signed by WP Schreiner.

¹²⁸ CAR, Cd 264, Correspondence relating to affairs in the Cape Colony, 17 May 1900, Letter to the Prime Minister from R Solomons, Attorney General.

¹²⁹ CAR, Cd 264, Correspondence relating to the affairs of the Cape Colony, Documents relating to the Ministerial crisis, Enclosure 1 in No 13, Prime Minister to Governor, 11 June 1900.

¹³⁰ Hofmeyr, *The Life of Jan Hendrik Hofmeyr (Onze Jan)*, pp558-p559, Hofmeyr to Schreiner 22 May 1900.

¹³¹ Walker, *WP Schreiner, A South African*, p233.

eligible to vote, was trying to survive in the hit and run of his first war. If he was captured he hid his colonial status by giving a false address.¹³² One can assume that the fervent pro-Boer fighter had put his right to vote for the Colonial Parliament behind him, and was looking forward to voting, after the Boer victory, for a representative in the Free State *Volksraad*. While Merriman fought for amnesty for the rank and file, the Wodehouse Magistrate reported that the voters themselves had a different point of view. There had been much discussion on their future, reported Charley Levey, the Assistant Magistrate, and as far as he could gather, the rebels would not be sorry if the franchise could be taken away from them as part of their punishment. They appeared to be 'sick of politics'. He said further that a number of once respectable farmers were now in a state of destitution, and more than half the farms were mortgaged.¹³³

Schreiner prided himself on taking the middle road, while others called him at best indecisive and stubborn. He was notably reluctant to make decisions, and when he finally made a stand, he lost the Bond support and the split in his ministry was too deep to carry his proposals through. Schreiner resigned and the so-called Bond Ministry was no more. Schreiner and *Onze Jan* Hofmeyr quarrelled, then Hofmeyr left for Europe where he stayed for the remainder of the war, pleading ill health. He said later that there was no way out of the impasse except complete victory on either one side or the other.¹³⁴

Sprigg Premier for the third time

Sir Gordon Sprigg was then asked to form a Progressive ministry. Sprigg, whose Parliamentary career went back 30 years, became Premier for the third time, holding the posts of both Premier and Treasurer from 18 June 1900. His ministry consisted of Sir Peter Faure, Secretary of Public Works; Sir John Frost, Minister Without Portfolio; Mr TL Graham, Colonial Secretary; Dr TW Smartt, Commissioner of Public Works; and Mr James Rose Innes, Attorney General. Sprigg, although nearly 70, was a highly experienced administrator and was the obvious choice as he had been pressing Milner to obtain assurances from Schreiner that his Government would introduce a bill for the appointment of a Judicial Commission, for the punishment of rebels, or failing that demand his resignation.¹³⁵

The debate over the Indemnity and Special Tribunals Act that began on 1 August 1900 continued for three weeks. The proposed legislation dealt with a variety of legal and administrative

¹³² CAR, AG 3558, Register of Rebels who are Prisoners of War.

¹³³ CAR, CCP 1/2/1/111, Occupation of the Colony by Free State forces, Report of CJ Levey, Assistant CC and RM of Dordrecht.

¹³⁴ Hofmeyr, *The Life of Jan Hendrik Hofmeyr (Onze Jan)*, pp559-563.

¹³⁵ Headlam, *The Milner Papers*, II, p111.

problems resulting from the war, and the enforcement of Martial Law. Four Bills made up the Act. Chapter One would indemnify the civil and military authorities for acts done under Martial Law and validate sentences passed by Courts Martial. The Second Chapter set up special courts to try cases of High Treason and all cases of a political character committed before or within six months of the passing of the act. Two judges and a barrister would be appointed, and the Court would have the power to pass any sentence that a Judge of the Supreme Court might have passed. The Third Chapter dealt with the appointment of Commissioners (one attorney and two magistrates) to try the rank and file. The forth Chapter dealt with compensation, loss or damage sustained through Military Operations or the Acts of the enemy or rebels.¹³⁶

The Progressives were in the majority and Sprigg had undertaken to pass the proposed legislation, so the act went through. While Rose Innes, who moved the motion, called for self-restraint, the debate reflected the tensions of war and became increasingly acrimonious. The Attorney General announced that 9,000 rebels had surrendered in the unsuccessful rebellion, and estimated that another 1,000 had crossed into the neighbouring states. Granting amnesty was not solely a colonial question, he reminded the House. In Responsible Government the Governor acted on his own responsibility, and although the Governor took counsel with his ministers, they had to give way if he did not agree. Nevertheless Rose Innes supported disfranchisement of rank and file, stating that people who rebelled without grievance should not go scot-free. He reminded the House of what had befallen the Gaika and the Tembu tribes after they rebelled; that recently after the Langeberg rebellion the tribal land had been taken away and the people indentured. He asked if they let the rebel go unpunished, what lesson was there for the future? He pointed out, too, that under the Constitution Ordinance any man convicted of serious offences could be disfranchised for life. However in 1892 the Colonial Parliament had passed legislation that certain crimes would only entail disfranchisement for five years.¹³⁷

As a result of proclamations issued by Gen EY Brabant, Gen Gatacre, Lieut-Col Charles Warren and Lord Methuen, colonists under arms had come in and surrendered. Lists of Class 2 rebels had been made up, and it was proposed that these lists should be posted in every ward. The court would then forward the lists to the Colonial Secretary, who would see they were struck off the voter's role. Rose Innes piloted the Bill through Parliament, supported by Schreiner and his supporters. John X Merriman led the opposition to the disfranchisement of Class 2 rebels, and he predicted that the bill would perpetuate opposition and strife. He described the rebellion as almost free from crime, and said that the Free Staters expected to get numerous volunteers. They were disappointed at the turnout,

¹³⁶ Cape of Good Hope, *Statutes and Indexes*, XII, 1896-1900, pp4251-4268.

¹³⁷ Cape of Good Hope, *Debates of the House of Assembly*, pp75-77, 1 August 1900, J Rose Innes, Attorney General.

proclaimed Martial Law and said that people had to join. While some came willingly, many understood that they were liable to fifteen years' imprisonment or to be shot if they did not serve the Boers.¹³⁸

The debate continued along party lines with Schreiner supporting the Government. Louis Zietsman, Progressive member for Griqualand, informed the House that if they did not accept the Bill the people would face criminal law. He warned that while the political rights of certain rebels were removed for five years (and a sterner punishment for the ringleaders) the poor white, the *bywoner*, would get off scot-free. Hendrik van Huysteen, member for George, also opposed to the disfranchisement, remarked that it was no punishment for many rebels who lived far from the polling booths and had not voted for years. The Indemnity and Special Tribunals Act of 1900 was passed with certain amendments on 27 August 1900. The Act was promulgated on 12 October 1900 and was to run until 12 April 1901.¹³⁹

The first sitting of the tribunal was held in Colesberg in December 1900. Sentences handed down to Class 1 rebels under the Second Chapter of the act included permanent disfranchisement. Nicholas Janse van Rensburg of Rietfontein was sentenced to eighteen months imprisonment and fined £500 or a further six months. Johan George Muller of Platberg was sentenced to fifteen months and Petrus Jacobus Pienaar was sentenced to one year. The convicted prisoners were transferred to Tokai Prison to serve their sentences.¹⁴⁰

Under Chapter three of the Special Tribunals Act printed lists of rebels whose surrender had been accepted as Class 2 rebels were to be put up in every ward from about November 1900 to February 1901.¹⁴¹ They would then be formerly disfranchised for five years when the Commissioners convened sittings in their division. The process of disfranchisement was treated with scorn by the loyal press. A report in the *Albert Times* and *Molteno News* refers to

“...the punishment meted out by a faltering, fatherly government to nearly 400 offenders. About a third of the number have been deprived of what they never had, enfranchisement”.¹⁴²

By the first anniversary of the rebellion in the Stormberg region and at Colesberg, there were marked changes in many close-knit family units. In Albert, Aliwal North, Barkly East and Wodehouse 185 Class 1 rebel leaders were now out on bail and over the months their wives had become accustomed to fetching and carrying food, clothing and bedding to their men-folk in the local gaol.

¹³⁸ Cape of Good Hope, *Debates of the House of Assembly*, pp84-95, 1 August 1900, JX Merriman.

¹³⁹ Cape of Good Hope, *Debates of the House of Assembly*, pp180-181, L Zietsman, 7 August, H Huysteen, George, 14 August 1900.

¹⁴⁰ CAR, AG 2117, Class 1 Rebels charged with High Treason under the Indemnity and Special Tribunals Act during October 1900.

¹⁴¹ CAR, AG 2019, Colesberg Surrender List, 97 names; CAR, AG2048, Vryburg Surrender List, 127 under Indemnity and Special Tribunals Act.

¹⁴² *Albert Times and Molteno News*, 30 August 1901.

The over 3,000 Class 2 surrendered rebels from these districts carried passes when they moved about their districts. About 280 rebels from the four districts continued hostilities in the Free State according to absconded rebel lists.¹⁴³ Large sales of livestock belonging to absconded rebels were held in the northeast Cape.¹⁴⁴

News, when it came, filtered in from family members, captured or fled to The Netherlands, Delagoa Bay, Simon's Town, and now Ceylon and St Helena, and lately the new prison at Tokai near Cape Town. Many Class 1 rebels out on bail were exiled to other towns. David de Wet, the ex-MLA, and PJ (Pony) de Wet, MLA for Wodehouse, and seven other men also out on bail, were exiled with their families to Beaufort West. They were allowed to live in the town, but were moved to a tent and guarded if a commando was nearby.¹⁴⁵ Dr Pieter Luttig of Aliwal North was first sent to Grahamstown on parole, and then in May 1900 was allowed to return to Prince Albert, his hometown and resume his medical practise under supervision.¹⁴⁶ Now the districts under Martial Law, and the rebels' lives, were dependant not on the Free Staters, but on rules and regulations and often the whims of the local commandant.

The districts north of the Orange River remained unsettled and likely to remain so with over 600 men from Barkly West, Kimberley, Herbert and Hay on the absconded rebel list.¹⁴⁷ By the beginning of December 1900, in the Cape Colony proper, the Indemnity and Special Tribunals Act was under way hearing cases. Spirits had lifted, the war would soon be over and certain colonial units were sent home. While the Class 1 rebels were in gaol or out on bail with heavy sureties, there was nothing to stop the rank and file rejoining the Free Staters and riding on commando again. However many surrendered rebels no longer trusted the Free Staters and would not ride with them again.

The Cape Colony was polarised and split into numerous factions, all highly suspicious of each other. The rebels blamed the Imperial and colonial forces for the mess they were in and were very angry with their erstwhile allies, the Free Staters. They, in their turn, were appalled by the khakis they had laughed at a few months ago, who were now sweeping through the Free State taking their stock. The loyalists returned to their farms in the Cape Colony, many from Boer gaols in Bloemfontein and Pretoria, only to discover that they had been looted and robbed by their neighbours and that the majority of the rebels had surrendered and had been allowed home on pass. The loyalists were furious at this turn of events.

¹⁴³ CAR, AG 2109, AG 3560 and AG 2008, Lists of Absconded Rebels; David and Taffy Shearing, 'The Rebel Record', unpublished, private archives of David and Taffy Shearing, Sedgfield.

¹⁴⁴ *Northern Post and Molteno News* advertised a stock sale at Lady Grey on 16 June 1900 in which 8,500 sheep, 200 cattle, 100 horses and 60 bales of wool were on offer from captured stock and stock of absconded rebels.

¹⁴⁵ Photographs of the party from Aliwal North are in the Beaufort West Museum.

¹⁴⁶ Luttig, 'Mediese Loopbaan van Dr P Luttig', Fransie Pienaar Museum, pp19-22.

¹⁴⁷ CAR, AG 2109, List of Absconded Rebels.

CHAPTER 3

REBEL INVOLVEMENT IN THE SECOND INVASION

The rebels rejoin in Griqualand West and Bechuanaland

By July 1900 the entire Griqualand West and Bechuanaland was back in British hands; the Union Jack was flying from the Magistrates' Courts, and inside the Colonial magistrates and clerks were back at their posts. As far as appearances were concerned the balance of power had tipped back in favour of the British forces. But had it? In reality an uneasy situation was building up as hostilities continued unabated over the border under Gen De la Rey.¹ In the Transvaal wandering bands of rebels, included fourteen tough fighters under Caspar Hendrik Groenewald, most of them had walked back from Machadadorp, when nearly all their horses died from horse sickness. They had precious little to eat on route.²

The uneasy peace in the colony was broken on 28 October 1900 when the Boer forces raided a farm four miles (six kms) from Vryburg, and a few weeks later, in mid-November, De Villiers' men wrecked the railway line in twenty places over a distance of four miles (six kms) between Belmont and Kimberley.³ The Magistrate at Barkly West warned the Attorney General's office that two or three local commandos had reappeared in the Kuruman region from the Transvaal, and on 24 December 1900 had been seen in the vicinity of Blinkfontein. A farmer, who fled the area with his stock, reported that the Boer forces were disarming blacks, and had driven them from their *stadt* on the Taung/Kuruman boundary. The position of the border farmers was a difficult one, said the Magistrate, as these Colonists were nearly all Class 1 rebels out on bail or Class 2 men out on pass. Those who had nothing to loose, or had a trial awaiting them, could easily be persuaded to rejoin, he said.⁴ Marthinus Wessels, MLA for Vryburg, also reported to Milner that Gen De Villiers was capturing wagons, arresting loyalists and commandeering the property of British subjects. Black and white farmers began driving their stock towards Vryburg, much of which eventually died in the overgrazed *veld*.⁵

¹ Amery (ed), *The Times History*, VI, p348.

² Bottomley, *Anglo-Boer War reminiscences of LJ Groenewald*, p168. Bottomley called it a 'warts and all' account of life on commando.

³ *The Albert Times*, 20 November 1900.

⁴ CAR, AG 2016, Folio 14, Weekly report, 24 December 1900.

⁵ NAR, FK 794, Milner to Chamberlain, 19 December 1900.

In January 1901 De la Rey replaced De Villiers, lately leader of the 280-strong Bloemhof Commando, with Cmdt JA van Zyl. Obviously the experiment of putting a rebel in control of the Transvaal burghers simply did not work, because before long Van Zyl too was back fighting on colonial soil again. De Villiers then became rebel general in Stellaland, Griqualand West and Bechuanaland.⁶ One of the advantages of having him as a leader was that he was an excellent strategist who did his best to get the commandos to combine their tactics. Scott states, "without organization and direction the individual insurgent unit would have very little impact".⁷

Three commandos under Van Zyl, Groenewald of Zoutfontein and Andries J van der Merwe of Meetfontein returned to Vryburg, moving circuitously, and began recruiting men who had laid down arms six months previously. Of the 88 Vryburg surrendered rebels about 68 rejoined.⁸ The Groenewalds reappeared at the family farm trying to get news. Many rebels would be captured in the vicinity of their homes when they became ill, wounded or just weary of living in the *veld*. Zoutfontein was obviously under surveillance because District Mounted Troops, with a black contingent attacked them. They beat them off and drove the troops back to Vryburg.⁹

The war of 1901/1902 between the burghers and rebels on the one hand and the men of the Colonial Defence Force, the Scott's Railway Guards and British flying columns on the other, would be a far cry from the heady days of 1899 and early 1900. This war was not fought over stirring ideals of patriotism and Afrikaner brotherhood. Instead the last eighteen months of the South African War was spent snatching basic necessities in a region decimated by the rinderpest, overgrazed by thousands of starving animals or littered with the remains of huge battles.

Groenewald and Van Zyl's first coup was capturing a convoy of 26 wagons at Geluk at New Year 1901. It had left Vryburg for Kuruman loaded with military stores, clothing, food and tobacco valued at £50,000.¹⁰ A week or so later Cmdt RJ Kirsten, with the Marico Commando, attacked Danielskuil, which however was well fortified and had a good trench system; the Boers were driven off.¹¹ In early February Gen Van Zyl also attacked Vryburg with 300 to 400 men, but was repulsed after some hours. When the rebels did not succeed in getting into the villages they turned to lumbering wagon trains carting supplies to the garrisoned villages that would become increasingly beleaguered.¹² The rebels soon controlled the roads, and consequently the access to the villages with the exception of Postmasburg to which they had free access as it was not garrisoned, as the local inhabitants had not raised a Town Guard.

⁶ Pretorius, *Life on Commando during the Anglo-Boer War 1899-1902*, p193; Constantine, 'The Guerrilla War in the Cape Colony', p8.

⁷ Scott, et al, *Insurgency*, p194.

⁸ CAR, AG 2049, Folio 42, rejoined rebels for Vryburg, list supplied by magistrate for each ward. There is also a note stating that most of these men surrendered on 16 January 1902.

⁹ Bottomley, *Anglo-Boer War reminiscences of LJ Groenewald*, p2.

¹⁰ *South African News Weekly*, 5 February 1901.

¹¹ Constantine, 'The Guerrilla War in the Cape Colony during the South African War of 1899-1902', p10.

Then Lord Methuen arrived at Taung with a strong column in January 1901 to combat renewed rebellion, and he operated between Fourteen Streams and Mafeking until the raiding tailed off.¹³ Van Zyl meanwhile had returned to Kuruman on a recruiting drive, but this time failed to find fresh recruits. Methuen reported that he was “dejected by their cold reception”.¹⁴ Considering that Van Zyl was the leading Kuruman rebel of 1899, this indicated a considerable shift in local opinion. All was quiet until Methuen was redeployed to the northwest Transvaal in June. Van Zyl then moved in as soon as the column left, and by 24 June was raiding cattle just outside Vryburg. When De Villiers began trekking along the road a few miles outside Barkly West, the Magistrate worried that he now commanded the district.¹⁵

Other commandos appeared sporadically in Griqualand West, including Edwin Conroy of Britstown, a fledgling leader who had lost the control of the Brandvlei rebels to Cmdt Manie Maritz. Conroy and 30 Kakamas rebels had also been defeated at N'Rougas by the Namaqualand Border Scouts on 23 May 1901.¹⁶ After a skirmish against White's Column at Wilgenhoutsdrif on 25 June, Conroy attempted to enter German South West Africa in order to negotiate a place of safety for his men. The Germans refused armed rebels entry, but they allowed 38 families of women and children into Damaraland, housing them in a camp at Smidsdrift.¹⁷

On 3 July the news that Conroy and 400 men were approaching Campbell ruined plans for dance the garrison had organised and about 40 soldiers and civilians took up position in two forts that overlooked the village. Conroy finally appeared two days later leading the Kakamas rebels boldly in broad daylight; a volley of rifle fire from both forts sent the horsemen racing for cover behind a range of hills. Then a messenger, carrying a white flag, approached one of the forts and handed over a note to Lieut CH Jones who was in charge. Conroy demanded the immediate surrender of the garrison and threatened force if they resisted. Jones rejected the demand, but asked for half an hour's grace in order to move the women and children to safety and recommenced firing when they had gone. There was an exchange of small arm fire throughout the day, and it was late before the shooting died down.

All was quiet in the morning and to their delight the garrison discovered that Conroy and his men had ridden away after three rebels were reportedly killed and four wounded. The garrison with no reported casualties was delighted to discover that the rebels had abandoned 21 horses, “a great deal of ammunition” and several rifles in their hurried withdrawal. Jones was later complimented on his

¹² *Oudtshoorn Courant*, 2 February 1901.

¹³ NAR, FK 806, Report of the Magistrate of Barkly West, 17 June 1901.

¹⁴ *The Albert Times*, 25 February 1901.

¹⁵ NAR, FK 806, 24 June 1901, Weekly report of Magistrate of Barkly West.

¹⁶ *Gordonia News*, 17 April 1959, Detailed account by an unnamed survivor; Adriaan Roodt, *Die Kaapse Rebel. Die Oorlogsavonture van Kommandant Edwin Conroy Tydens die Tweede Vryheidsoorlog*, pp81-98. Conroy played an unsubstantiated heroic role at N'Rougas according to Roodt.

¹⁷ NAR, FK 805, Weekly Intelligence Report, 5 June 1901.

stand and, as he was the only officer present, prided himself that he had done pretty well. His small force behaved splendidly, he said.¹⁸

On his own, Conroy proved boastful and ineffectual. He next appeared in Postmasburg on 10 August, and whipped three local loyalists running the village for no apparent reason other than that they were loyalists.¹⁹ He roamed about, attacking isolated groups, and soon had a terrible reputation for sheer brutality towards any loyal colonist he found alone and unarmed. However, when Conroy was backed by DeVilliers, he was certainly more successful. Later at Rooikoppies on the road to Campbell they caught the 18th Battalion Imperial Yeomanry on 24 August in a crossfire killing twelve and wounding twenty. Although De Villiers and Conroy always boasted that they had killed 51 soldiers in this skirmish, they more effective fighters when they worked together.²⁰ However these marginal regions could not sustain the grazing pressure of trekking commandos for any length of time, neither could the communities (what was left of them) feed large numbers of men either. Consequently they either captured convoys or lived on meat, mealies, wild honey and *veldkos*.

By the end of August there were four commandos north of the Orange River; De Villiers with 200 men was at Modderfontein about 30 miles (48 kms) north of Prieska, Conroy with 100 men was at Witsand fifteen miles (24 kms) west of Griquatown, Andries van der Merwe with 150 men was moving from Klipfontein towards Vryburg, and Jan Albertus van Zyl with 150 men was at Soetival, 22 miles (35 kms) west of Doringnek Siding and 31 miles (50 kms) north of Vryburg.²¹ De Villiers, trying to get rebel groups coordinated south of the Orange River, urged Conroy to return to the Kakamas and Kenhardt region with Abraham Louw of Calvinia, who had returned from the Free State, and to work in the Calvinia district as their men wanted to operate nearer home; and he wanted them to coordinate with Cmdt Manie Maritz in the northern Cape.²² The commando had lost faith in Conroy, and a steady stream of rebels slipped back to Kakamas and elected Jan Louw leader in his place. It was planting season and they needed to grow vegetables, wheat and fodder to survive. Conroy eventually returned to the northern Cape sometime after October with the few men who had stuck by him.²³

By early September Van der Merwe's commando had become careless. A column under Lieut-Col A Murray, ordered to the Vryburg district, waited patiently near the railway line for reports

¹⁸ Press cutting from an unknown British newspaper, 'A Stoke Officer's Experience', 7 July 1901 sent to this researcher without a covering letter.

¹⁹ Snyman, *Postmasburg en die Tweede Vryheidsoorlog*, p17.

²⁰ *South African Field Force Casualty List*, Section July to December 1901, 18th Battalion Imperial Yeomanry, 12 killed and died of wounds and twenty wounded at Rooikoppies near Griquatown, 24 August 1901, p16.

²¹ NAR, FK 2111, 31 August 1901, Intelligence Report of Boer forces north of the Orange River.

²² War Museum of the Boer Republics, 119-165, Report by De Villiers, 2 September 1901; *South African Field Force Casualty List*, Section July to December 1901, p16, 8th Battalion Imperial Yeomanry, 15 killed or died of wounds, 18 wounded, 24 August 1901.

from the Cape Police of rebel laagers. Murray then surprised Van der Merwe's laager and captured eight rebels, while the remainder escaped into the bush on their bare feet, with only their rifles and bandoliers. Not only were the commando's slaughter stock, wagons, carts and reserve ammunition captured, but their horses were driven off as well. Loosing the horses was the greatest loss as the colonial forces had driven all stray horses into protection camps, reducing the number left on the *veld* to a minimum. They were lucky to be partially re-horsed when De Villiers raided Griquatown and re-equipped Van der Merwe's men a month later.²⁴

By the end of October Van Zyl, with 50 men, swept into Taung and began looting Moseppa in the black reserve, until then thought to be relatively safe from raiding commandos.²⁵ The Vryburg Magistrate reported that the situation had deteriorated to such an extent in November 1901 that all farms were abandoned and there were no stock left. Two-thirds of the farming families were in camps; some had been brought in, but many had come voluntarily, as they were destitute and in a poor state.²⁶ Until the end of the war the trekking commandos carried out typical guerilla tactics, raiding and then disappearing, looting cattle and searching for horses. They also planted vegetables, mainly sweet potatoes, when things were quiet.

In January 1902 De la Rey with Kemp ordered Van Zyl and Groenewald to join him in a cattle raid of a black *stadt* near Taung to get slaughter stock for the western Transvaal commandos. Many of the blacks were armed, and they fought back until charged by the Boer forces. The commando then inflicted heavy casualties on the black civilians as their women and children fled into the hills. An armoured train unfortunately also bombarded the hill with the result that they sustained further casualties as the gunners had mistakenly assumed that they were firing on Boers making for shelter. The captured cattle were divided among the Boers and the rebels, who from then onward kept raiding the black reserves during the last few months of the war.²⁷

On 10 January 1902 Cmdts JBG Kemp and B Celliers raided the district of Mafeking, driving off 3,524 head of cattle, 3,380 sheep and goats, 45 horses and mules and 147 donkeys. The wife of Lieut A Brown of the Mafeking DMT was shot dead by a Boer, Henniker, when she appeared at the door of her cabin trying to find out who was firing and why. After that the Boers raced into Sanistadt and took away most of the clothing of the loyalist farmers' wives and the children. Two farmers, Edward Wright of Neverset and either Herbert, Walter or Richard Kent of Kliparani, were stripped

²³ HN Kotzé and DA Kotzé, *Oorlog Sonder Oorwinning. Die Anglo-Boereoorlog in die Omgewing van Kakamas, Kenhardt, Keimoes en Upington*, p141. Report on Kakamas and Wards V and VI in connection with recent rebellion, 2 October 1901.

²⁴ *Eastern Province Herald*, 9 September 1901, 'Van der Merwe's laager captured'.

²⁵ NAR, FK 821, Report of District of Taung, 27 October 1901.

²⁶ CAR, Cd 983, Further correspondence relating to South Africa, Conditions of Districts, November 1901.

²⁷ Bottomley, 'Anglo-Boer War reminiscences of LJ Groenewald', p10.

naked and everything in their house, including the linen, was taken.²⁸ However the Boer forces had left themselves exposed, because on the same day a Kimberley column under Maj Paris swooped down and captured Cmdt JF de Beer's laager at Mokwani in the Christiana district. Paris captured five people, 500 cattle and 5,000 sheep.²⁹ At this stage the humanitarian situation was far worse than after the rinderpest; food was short, and clothing, boots, and medicine were virtually unavailable. The legend is that the women and children went into the camps strong and well; the reality was that the life out in the *veld* had become one of appalling attrition where the people fought daily, not for independence, but survival.

From January to March 1902 De Villiers moved into Postmasburg and made it his base, and appointed a *Landdrost* to administer the area as he acted as go-between for Gens De la Rey and Smuts in the northern Cape.³⁰ In February 1902 he began negotiations with Lord Kitchener to lay down arms with 600 men, but broke off contact after Lord Methuen was defeated at Tweespruit. The Magistrate then reported that over 66 rebels under Van Zyl were captured at the end of April 1902, although Van Zyl himself got away.³¹

It was autumn and the children were in tatters, and De Villiers allowed the women living on the farms near Griquatown to get winter clothes for their children. They came into the village and bartered precious farm produce for clothing and hoarded butter for shirts. When a long-awaited convoy arrived in the middle of May 1902, the guards reported an easy run. A farmer, Badenhorst, told the Magistrate that the rebels were sick of the war and of the roaming life. They too were in a terrible state, he said, and had virtually no clothes to wear and feared they would not survive another winter in the *veld*.³²

Invasion of the Cape south of the Orange River, December 1900

Towards the end of 1900 Steyn and De Wet decided to plan a second invasion of the Cape Colony, hoping that the return of Free State commandos to the Cape Colony would spur the Dutch colonists into widespread rebellion. Van Warmelo, in the Waterberg, called this dream, "that hope, our life-buoy on which we kept our eyes fixed".³³ De Wet was sure he could stir up such a revolt that the war would end in Boer victory.³⁴

²⁸ CAR, GH 23/50 1902, Amended report on the raid by the enemy on the district of Mafeking, 10 January 1902, by E Graham Green, Acting Resident Magistrate; CAR, CCP 1/1/39, Mafeking Voters Roll was consulted for the possible Christian names of Wright and Kent; Constantine, 'The Guerilla War in the Cape Colony during the South African War, 1899-1902', p16.

²⁹ *Northern Post*, 17 January 1902.

³⁰ Snyman, *Postmasburg*, p17.

³¹ *Tarka Herald*, 31 May 1902.

³² NAR, FK 851, 15 April 1902; CAR, AG 2049, Folio 49, RM list of surrenders, 16 January 1902.

³³ Van Warmelo, *On Commando*, p102.

³⁴ De Villiers, *Met De Wet en Steyn in het Veld*, p91.

From December 1900 onwards Boer forces, large and small, slipped over the Orange River into the Cape Colony with the goal of snatching victory from a complacent British army who were sure the war was over. Lord Roberts had given up his command and returned to England and, with less fanfare, so had seasoned Colonials, as well as Imperial Yeomanry after a year's service. A second invasion of the Colony was the only feasible way left for the Boer force to carry on the struggle against the South African Field Force. As food and clothing became scarcer north of the Orange River, so the Cape Colony in contrast became the land of plenty, where commandos could re-equip themselves with horses, horseshoes, food, clothing and boots.³⁵ Unlike the invasion of 1899, the Free Staters were unable to occupy the colonial districts or go through the pretext of annexation. They operated instead in small mobile units and made lightning strikes against the British columns that had set off in hind pursuit, giving the Boer forces in the Republics some relief.

Gen Barry Hertzog crossed the Orange River at Sanddrift on 15 December 1900, and led a force into the northwest and western districts.³⁶ In later years Naser stated Hertzog's goal was to show the outside world that the Boer forces could still mount a strong force.³⁷ The question is, were they really a strong force? No, the commandos under George Brand, Tielman Nieuwoudt, Hendrik Pretorius, Max Theunissen and Asst Cmdt Munnik Hertzog were shabby and poorly armed. Hertzog said only 137 men out of 350 carried rifles and they had about eleven bullets each.³⁸ The few rebels riding with the Free Staters included Christoffel Myburgh of Lady Grey, in charge Gen Hertzog's scouts, and Japie Naser of Colesberg.³⁹ Once they overran a weak opposition near the border they were masters of the empty space before them. They commandeered food, horses and saddles at Philipstown, picking up two recruits.⁴⁰ Probably it was due to the empty bandoleers and the number of unarmed men that made the sympathisers hesitate to join them.

A few more recruits were picked up at Vosburg and Britstown, but there was no flocking to the flag.⁴¹ The British hoped the Boers would swing north after leaving Britstown. Instead they threw off the pursuing columns and raced for Carnarvon. Milner, who feared that the columns would be "lost in the vast spaces of the west", ordered that the first priority was that the Cape Peninsula was to be protected from the invaders.⁴² Gen H Settle pulled the columns back from hind pursuit, formed a

³⁵ Strydom, *Kaapland en die Tweede Vryheidsoorlog*, p145.

³⁶ Amery (ed), *The Times History*, V, p125; CM van den Heever, *Generaal JBM Hertzog*, p116, *The Times History* said there were 1000 men in the commando, however Van den Heever, quoting Hertzog, gave a more realistic figure of 350 men.

³⁷ Wessels (ed), *Die Oorlogsherinneringe van Kommandant Jacob Petrus Naser*, p57.

³⁸ G van Lill, *Ned Gerefemerde Gemeente Vanrhynsdorp 1877-1977*, p105.

³⁹ Vanrhynsdorp Museum. Myburgh appeared on a photograph taken at Van Rhynsdorp in February 1901.

⁴⁰ Van den Heever, *Gen JBM Hertzog*, p115; CAR, ZP 1/1/374: Co 48/550, Report of Philipstown Magistrate, 18 December 1900.

⁴¹ Roodt, *Die Kaapse Rebel*, p15.

⁴² CAR, ZP 1/1/374, Milner to Kitchener, 4 January 1901; Pers com, Petrus Jacobus Vermeulen of Kaffirskloof, Carnarvon, who was five when George Brand and Munnik Hertzog visited his parent's farm, Kareebosch, in December 1900.

defensive ring and occupied the passes and the important points in the Worcester, Ceres and Piquetberg districts.⁴³ This left the whole of the northwest Cape open to the commandos that swept through Sutherland and Amandelboom (Williston) and left them to commandeer about 200 horses as well as weapons, mules, fodder and food from farmers.⁴⁴ The commandos invested Calvinia from 7 to 16 January 1901, looted the local shops and commandeered a further 600 Hantam horses on promissory notes issued in that district. Farmers were caught hiding their animals were punished.⁴⁵

It was the abusive treatment of the coloured population that made the investment notorious. Gen Hertzog appointed a Free Stater, Stephanus van der Merwe, magistrate and he had many coloured inhabitants flogged for breaking the curfew as well as for singing British war songs. A leader in the community, Abraham Esau, a blacksmith who had organised a procession through the village to celebrate the relief of Mafeking was arrested and brought before a Court composed of Free State officers with Cmdt G Brand acting as President. The court was a travesty of justice, as they had no right to try Esau in the first place. It was obvious that he would be found guilty on all the charges of spying, sending away information, asking for weapons and of being arrogant and self important. He was sentenced to be flogged, languished in gaol and was later executed on the outskirts of Calvinia.⁴⁶ Many other black and coloured people would be beaten, maimed and killed during the South African War, and were forgotten. Not so Abraham Esau; his sufferings have come to epitomise the sufferings of many. Even in the 1960s he was still discussed in the village, but always with a measure of discomfort. In the 1980s while attending a wedding in Calvinia this researcher overheard talk on the first referendum for a Tripartite Parliament; and the question was asked - what would be said in Parliament about Abraham Esau?⁴⁷

On 16 January the commandos split up, some of the men returning to the Free State, but Hertzog and Nieuwhoudt went on to Van Rhynsdorp where about ten rebels were recruited and horses were commandeered. A party of 25 men under Cmdt Nieuwhoudt reached Lamberts Bay and became involved in a minor skirmish.⁴⁸ Three weeks later Hertzog hurriedly withdrew from Van Rhynsdorp after a scout reported that Kitchener's Fighting Scouts, led by Col Johan Colenbrander, were

⁴³ Amery (ed), *The Times History*, V, p130.

⁴⁴ Dyason, Daniel, Claims Journal, 1893-1903 (Fraserburg Lawyer), private archives of F Hansen, Fraserburg; *S4 News Weekly*, said Gen Hertzog said in Fraserburg district he was sick of guerrilla warfare but Cmdt Pretorius wanted to go on, 12 January 1901.

⁴⁵ CAR, Cd 547, Report of C Dük, Asst RM and CC of Calvinia, 6 March 1901; *Grocott's Penny Mail*, 20 February, 1901; *Cape Times Weekly*, 20 February 1901; Sharad H Gilbert, *Rhodesia and After: Being the Story of the 17th and 18th Battalions of Imperial Yeomanry in South Africa*, p256.

⁴⁶ Nel, *Die Kaapse Rebelle van die Hantam-Karoo*, p8.

⁴⁷ Nasson, *Abraham Esau's War*, pp130-131; *Grocott's Penny Mail*, 20 February 1901; This researcher first heard about Esau when she was a trained nurse at the Calvinia hospital in 1960 and people then said that the local rebels were later blamed and not the Free Staters for the way he was treated.

⁴⁸ CAR, ZP 1/1/372, Report of RM CJ Bam, Occupation of Vanrhynsdorp, 16 February, 1901; J Bekker, 'Jasse vir die Boere', *Die Huisgenoot*, 3 June 1949; CAR, AG 2106, Folio 388, Returns of Rebels, June 1903.

advancing, from Clanwilliam.⁴⁹ The commandos retreated, abandoning wagons loaded with loot. With them were 50 rebel recruits, including Abraham Louw of Rooiberg, Calvinia, who would return in May as a local leader.⁵⁰ Hertzog's commandos returned to Philipstown on 23 February.⁵¹ Cmdt Brand was reportedly bitter because so few colonists had joined their expedition, and speculated, "If 10,000 Cape Boers had joined us en masse, Kitchener would have been forced to move south, and Louis Botha could have retaken Pretoria".⁵²

Gen Jan Christian Smuts later condemned Gen Hertzog's hurried flight as "doing us much harm in those parts", and said that he threw away an opportunity to rekindle rebellion as he had not recruited a meaningful number of rebels. Neither had he left anybody behind to raise a rebel commando.⁵³ The Hertzog Commando had missed an opportunity; they had caught the British and colonial forces by surprise, they had ridden virtually unchecked from Sanddrift across the sparsely populated northern Cape, and some of the men even reached the Atlantic Ocean. However, without a fixed purpose, they proved to be only a raiding band that returned to the Free State on 25 February with horses. At the time though, they were an enormous problem to the British who said that to come to terms with them by fair chasing was a remote hope. As they had two or three horses apiece they could always keep ahead of the pursuit; marching and foraging at full speed over a front of fifteen to twenty miles (24 to 32 kms).⁵⁴

As a result of their illtreatment, the coloured people especially feared and hated the Boer forces, and these people, whose ability to fight back, was overlooked, reacted by joining the Irregular Forces and Town Guards, or became Scouts in the Auxiliary Special Corps. A result of the cruelty of Hertzog's men was that it increased the number of enemy waging war against the Boer forces.⁵⁵

Cmdt Pieter Hendrik Kritzinger also led an invasion similar to Hertzog's into the Midlands in December 1900. He had the advantage that most of the pursuing columns were engaged in driving De Wet out of the Colony during February 1901, enabling him to recruit colonists more easily. Captains Gideon Jacobus Scheepers, Wilhelm Diederick Fouché of Rouxville and Francois Johannes Viljoen of Bethulie led the commandos under him. Capt Johannes Smith of the Free State Artillery had an independent command.⁵⁶ This second invasion caused panic to sweep through the Colony, and the Colonial Government and British military forces reacted in alarm. In order to repel the invaders, guard

⁴⁹ *SA News Weekly*, 9 February 1901.

⁵⁰ CAR, ZP 1/1/374, Report by F Mackay on 11 Calvinia rebels in Pretorius' commando, 9 February 1901; CAR, AG 2106, Return of Rebels, June 1903.

⁵¹ Van den Heever, *Gen JBM Hertzog*, p117.

⁵² *SA News Weekly*, 9 February 1901.

⁵³ NAR, Smuts papers, Vol 314/1, Smuts, Notebook on the invasion of the Cape Colony, 2 August 1901.

⁵⁴ Nel, *Die Kaapse Rebelle van die Hantam-Karoo*, p83.

⁵⁵ CAR, ZP 1/1/374, Letter from Daneels, Coloured Men's Political Association, to Milner, 7 January, 1901; CAR, D/D 1/66, Folio 9457, Petition from 100 coloured residents of Richmond to Resident Magistrate for arms to defend the town, 3 April 1901.

the railway lines and maintain order, the Sprigg Government raised the Colonial Defence Force on 31 December 1900, dividing it into Town Guards, District Mounted Troops, 'B' Mounted Troops and General Service Troops (Gorrings's Flying Column). The District Mounted Troops were loyalist farmers and many had served in the Colonial Division previously and knew their districts intimately; they were acquainted with many rebels personally, which assisted in their capture and identification later on.⁵⁷

Martial Law was put into force throughout the Colony with the exception of the black Territories and the seaports. The population of the fourteen additional districts, now also under Martial Law, were disarmed and bicycles were stored away.⁵⁸ Horses were commandeered, forage controlled and the freedom of movement of civilians restricted while the sale of arms and ammunition was stopped.⁵⁹ Towns were fortified and garrisoned, and above and beyond the Volunteer Forces already in the field, seventeen Irregular Corps were raised for service in the Cape Colony or for general service in South Africa.⁶⁰

The Border Scouts (headquarters Upington) had been raised in May 1900 from the coloured communities of Kenhardt and Gordonia districts, and as the troops were withdrawn their numbers were increased to 300. Two other coloured corps, the Namaqualand Border Scouts and the Bushmanland Borderers, operated in Namaqualand and central Bushmanland and this force was increased until it fielded well over 1,000 men. Led by British officers and armed and equipped by the Imperial Treasury, they were hardened fighters, good horsemen and good shots. They gave as good as they got against their arch enemy: the rebel of the northwest Cape.⁶¹

Boer expectations that there would be a second general uprising of the Cape Dutch were unrealistic. The numbers of colonial loyalists in uniform (English and Dutch) eventually totalled 33,000 by July 1901. They had been augmented by *Uitlanders* from the Witwatersrand, convalescents returning to duty, plus an increasing number of experienced time-expired soldiers from Britain and other colonies who sought re-enlistment in colonial regiments.⁶²

Many of the colonists who joined the DMT in the north-eastern districts were also men who would not be chased from their homes this time round. Geo Keith Jackson, a farmer who had

⁵⁶ War Museum, Anon diary, 4299/4, 5 December, 1900; *De Graaff Reinetter*, 17 April, 1902, Statement at Kritzinger's trial.

⁵⁷ CAR, AG 3421, Preliminary Investigation into charges of High Treason of DJ Schoeman; July 1902.

⁵⁸ Amery (eds), *The Times History*, V, pp556-557. Martial Law was proclaimed in the districts of Britstown, Victoria West, Richmond, Hanover, Murraysburg, Graaff-Reinet, Aberdeen, Middelburg, Steynsburg, Cradock, Tarka and Molteno on 20 December 1900. It was extended to Beaufort West and Carnarvon on 27 December; to Calvinia, Clanwilliam, Piquetberg, Malmesbury, Tulbagh, Paarl and Stellenbosch on 7 January 1901; and on 17 January to the whole of the Cape Colony excepting the Cape ports, Wynberg and black Territories.

⁵⁹ CAR, Cd 981 X11, Martial Law, pp76-115.

⁶⁰ CAR, D/D 6/106, Classification List of SA Corps; CAR, D/D 1/71, Cape Colonial Troops, 8 April 1901.

⁶¹ Kotzé, *Oorlog Sonder Oorwinning*, pp40-41; CAR, D/D 6/106, Classification List, South African Corps, the Scouts in the Northwest were designated Class D2, for services in particular districts of the Colony.

attempted to remain neutral during the first invasion; had been tried by the Dordrecht War Council and held prisoner in the Bloemfontein Gaol for some months. In 1901 he joined the Dordrecht Volunteer Guard and led the patrol that killed or fatally wounded three republicans at Moordenaarspoort, Dordrecht in September 1901. The sole survivor of that ambush was Gen J C Smuts.⁶³

Boer recruitment was also hampered by the fact that Class 1 rebels in the northern border districts were in gaol or out on bail. The Class 2 rebels, who had not absconded, were out on pass. This time around many Dutch farmers remained neutral and had as little to do as possible with what they called the 'Transvaal war'. Families did not go on commando this time; it was the younger Afrikaner who was invited to join a cause, already irretrievably lost for the sake of excitement and adventure. A George farmer wrote to the local paper that Lieut Louis Wessels, with Cmdt Kritzingen, had taken his horses at Diep Kloof when he refused to sell them. He asked them why had they entered the Cape Colony and placed the Afrikaner in a bad position, and Wessels replied, "What the Boers want, they take".⁶⁴

The commandos had to have supplies of food, clothing, weapons and ammunition in order to function. All they brought with them from the Free State was what they had: their sources of supply would be colonial shops and what was on the farms. Or from captured British and Colonial troops. In the beginning goods the Boers took were paid for, but later goods were taken on promissory notes that could never be redeemed. And all the while there was also outright looting from the colonists who had been disarmed. The second invasion transformed sections of the Cape Colony into a confused battleground over which a thinly disguised civil war would rage.

The original aim of Kritzingen's men was not to attack British forces, but to get recruits, clothing and above all boots. They had crossed the Orange River on 16 December 1900, near Knapdaar, and rode southwest along the mountain ranges, planning to raid Middelburg for supplies. Capt Scheepers' commando captured 40 men from the Prince Alfred's Guard after they derailed a train at Sheldon Station. The Boers disarmed the Volunteers and gave their rifles to newly recruited rebels, but smashed the rest - nobody anticipating how acute the Boer shortage of arms and ammunition would soon become.⁶⁵

British columns had arrived in Middelburg by train, with the result that Kritzingen's men changed their route and moved on. Then the Bethulie Commando returned to the Free State after Viljoen was wounded and left behind. The implication of this was that when a setback occurred there

⁶² CAR, D/D 1/74 3348, re Capt A Dryburgh of MMR; CAR, D/D 1/75 3646; CAR, PMO 79, Governor to Lord Kitchener, 17 July 1901.

⁶³ CAR, AG 3421, Preliminary Examination of DWJ Schoeman charged with HT, statement by GK Jackson dated 20 September 1900; Taffy and David Shearing, *General Jan Smuts and his Long Ride*, pp38-39.

⁶⁴ *The George and Knysna Herald*, 21 February 1901.

⁶⁵ *Official Record of the Guard's Brigade*, p204, 30 December 1900.

was always the danger that the Free Staters would desert.⁶⁶ Twenty-three young colonists joined Kritzingers' Commando on 7 January 1901 from the Midlands, and among them was Francois Retief who said, "there was a shortage of men to fight the English who were coming to take their farms away".⁶⁷ Ten recruits joined Scheepers' and Fouché's Commandos at Richmond, including Philip du Plessis, who wrote *Oomblikke van Spanning*.⁶⁸

Arnott, a sergeant in the Queenstown Rifle Volunteers, captured by the commando stated later he doubted that a general rebellion of the Cape Dutch landowners was in the offing. Although he had watched the farmers and their families cheer the commandos when they arrived at farms and heard them sing the *Volkslied*. They also bartered horses or sold them on promissory notes, but when it came to joining the commando the landowners were full of excuses.⁶⁹ The farmers knew the first rebellion had collapsed and many rebels had still to face charges in court. Arnott proved perspicacious. Less than 5,000 Cape rebels were involved in the Second Invasion, and these rebel force mainly consisted of landless younger sons or tenant farmers because Class 2 rebels could only be expected to loose the vote for five years.⁷⁰ The legal niceties will be discussed in Chapter 4.

Essential to the success of rebellion was a string of fresh horses for the rebel recruits. In order to thwart them regimental remount officers and the colonial government bought up horses all over the Colony, quickly reducing the number freely available. Two thirds of Malmesbury's horses were commandeered by the end of January, leading to a run on the banks.⁷¹ A total of 2,691 horses and mules sold to the military in Victoria West, Graaff-Reinet, Middelburg, Hanover and Knysna during February alone.⁷² By May 1901, 45,000 colonial horses and mules had been bought, commandeered or driven into protection camps.⁷³ The removal of the horses was the key strategy in the campaign to make rebellion unsustainable despite the hardship it caused the general population. The Colony was simply too extensive to use infantry in this kind of war. While the commandos could still ride with a spare horses on a leading rein, they did not realize that the time would come when they would walk with their saddles on their backs hunting for a horse; another threat was the danger of African horse sickness in the autumn.

⁶⁶ FAR, SO/POW, Prisoners of War in Cape and Natal, Viljoen, POW 17413 was captured on 3 January 1901; War Museum of the Boer Republics, Anon diary, 4299/4, 1 January 1901; CAR, AG 2095, Magistrate's List of those who joined the enemy from Graaff-Reinet.

⁶⁷ Killian, 'Die Verhaal van Francois Jacobus Retief', unpublished, Archives of Dirk and Fie Theron, p5, 'They' were presumably the British and the rumour probably started with BJ Viljoen's alarmist pamphlet which appeared in Aliwal North in September 1899.

⁶⁸ CAR, AG 2044, report of GJ Boyes, Magistrate of Richmond, 10 January 1901.

⁶⁹ *Beaufort Courier*, 31 January 1901, 'Report of Sergt AW Arnott of Queenstown Rifle Volunteers'.

⁷⁰ CAR, AG 2106, return of Cape Rebels as of June 1903. The totals however do not add up and because an individual database was used for this study rebel numbers, appear to be under reported.

⁷¹ *Oudtshoorn Courant*, 10 January 1901.

⁷² CAR, D/D 1/65, folios 8491 to 8713.

⁷³ CAR, D/D 7/13, Gen AS Wynne to Commandant No 1 area (Queenstown), 16 May 1901.

Kritzinger's Commando defeated Grenfell's Column on 11 January 1901 at Waterval near Murraysburg, and killed seven men of the SA Light Horse; nine men in 2nd Brabants were also wounded.⁷⁴ Still only twenty rebels who took part in the skirmish managed to get hold of an enemy rifle afterwards. There was immense competition for captured rifles among the rebels and the Free Staters because it was soon apparent that ammunition for the Mauser and the Martini-Henry was becoming scarce. The whole commando, not just the new recruits, were all hoping for a Lee-Netford with bullets to fill their bandoliers. From beginning the rebel used his bullets sparingly and his tactics were irrevocably affected by the uncertainty of their supply.⁷⁵

Leaving their wounded to be nursed by local people Grenfell's Column, still in pursuit of Kritzinger, was diverted to Beaufort West. There they entrained and travelled to Prince Albert Road as they intended to turn the Boer forces before they reached Oudtshoorn.⁷⁶ Meanwhile Scheepers and Fouché rode into an undefended Aberdeen and recruited thirty youngsters, including a saddle-maker Carel van Heerden and a Dr George Smith, shops were looted and the commando rode off with 60 horses intended for the military.⁷⁷ A few days later Scheepers' Commando reached the undefended village of Uniondale; the officers moved into the local hotel for the weekend and left on the Monday with all the spare horses plus eighteen recruits. While charming Kritzinger always enjoyed a good press as a kindly man, the coloured people were terrified of Scheepers who already had a reputation that "their lives had no value in his eyes".⁷⁸

The pursuit by the military of the commandos in the Olifants Valley near Oudtshoorn was halted as Queen Victoria had died and the columns held ceremonial parades to mark her passing on 22 January 1901. The Boers under Fouché and Scheepers rested their horses and slaughtered cattle during the pause until Lieut-Col Douglas Haig started driving the Boer forces out of Kruis Rivier two days later and the Oudtshoorn Volunteer Rifles, who had served in the Free State in Robert Horse in 1900, turned Kritzinger at Rooirivier near Vlakeplaas.⁷⁹ By the end of the month Kritzinger and Smith had been driven into the Couga Mountains near Willowmore and they then trekked north "living on the country, never attacking where there was a show of force, and avoiding mounted troops".⁸⁰

⁷⁴ *South African Field Force Casualty List*, Section January to June 1901, 11 January 1901, pp116 and 96.

⁷⁵ Killian, 'Die Verhaal van Francois Jacobus Retief', p8; Du Plessis, *Oomblikke van Spanning*, p21.

⁷⁶ *The Official Record of the Guard's Brigade*, 14 January 1901.

⁷⁷ *The Beaufort Courier*, 30 January 1901; Killian, 'Die Verhaal van Francois Jacobus Retief', p10.

⁷⁸ R Morrow, *A Memento of the Anglo-Boer War, Uniondale, 1901*, undated pamphlet. Dr Morrow arrived to do a locum in Uniondale a few days before Scheepers' commando entered the village.

⁷⁹ War Museum of the Boer Republics, 4299/4, Anon diary, 27 January 1901; Arthur Taute, 'The Taute Papers', 'Notes on the passage of Boers who passed through the Southern Cape', unpublished, private archives of Mrs Daisy Taute, George, nd. Members of the OVR had served in Roberts Horse.

⁸⁰ Cape of Good Hope, *Government Gazette Notice 123*, 7 February 1901. The exception was a fight against a patrol led by Capt A Oliver of the West Australian Mounted Infantry.

Kritzinger's Commando defeated Grenfell's Column on 11 January 1901 at Waterval near Murraysburg, and killed seven men of the SA Light Horse; nine men in 2nd Brabants were also wounded.⁷⁴ Still only twenty rebels who took part in the skirmish managed to get hold of an enemy rifle afterwards. There was immense competition for captured rifles among the rebels and the Free Staters because it was soon apparent that ammunition for the Mauser and the Martini-Henry was becoming scarce. The whole commando, not just the new recruits, were all hoping for a Lee-Netford with bullets to fill their bandoliers. From beginning the rebel used his bullets sparingly and his tactics were irrevocably affected by the uncertainty of their supply.⁷⁵

Leaving their wounded to be nursed by local people Grenfell's Column, still in pursuit of Kritzinger, was diverted to Beaufort West. There they entrained and travelled to Prince Albert Road as they intended to turn the Boer forces before they reached Oudtshoorn.⁷⁶ Meanwhile Scheepers and Fouché rode into an undefended Aberdeen and recruited thirty youngsters, including a saddle-maker Carel van Heerden and a Dr George Smith, shops were looted and the commando rode off with 60 horses intended for the military.⁷⁷ A few days later Scheepers' Commando reached the undefended village of Uniondale; the officers moved into the local hotel for the weekend and left on the Monday with all the spare horses plus eighteen recruits. While charming Kritzinger always enjoyed a good press as a kindly man, the coloured people were terrified of Scheepers who already had a reputation that "their lives had no value in his eyes".⁷⁸

The pursuit by the military of the commandos in the Olifants Valley near Oudtshoorn was halted as Queen Victoria had died and the columns held ceremonial parades to mark her passing on 22 January 1901. The Boers under Fouché and Scheepers rested their horses and slaughtered cattle during the pause until Lieut-Col Douglas Haig started driving the Boer forces out of Kruis Rivier two days later and the Oudtshoorn Volunteer Rifles, who had served in the Free State in Robert Horse in 1900, turned Kritzinger at Rooirivier near Vlakteplaas.⁷⁹ By the end of the month Kritzinger and Smith had been driven into the Couga Mountains near Willowmore and they then trekked north "living on the country, never attacking where there was a show of force, and avoiding mounted troops".⁸⁰

⁷⁴ *South African Field Force Casualty List*, Section January to June 1901, 11 January 1901, pp116 and 96.

⁷⁵ Killian, 'Die Verhaal van Francois Jacobus Retief', p8; Du Plessis, *Oomblikke van Spanning*, p21.

⁷⁶ *The Official Record of the Guard's Brigade*, 14 January 1901.

⁷⁷ *The Beaufort Courier*, 30 January 1901; Killian, 'Die Verhaal van Francois Jacobus Retief', p10.

⁷⁸ R Morrow, *A Memento of the Anglo-Boer War, Uniondale, 1901*, undated pamphlet. Dr Morrow arrived to do a locum in Uniondale a few days before Scheepers' commando entered the village.

⁷⁹ War Museum of the Boer Republics, 4299/4, Anon diary, 27 January 1901; Arthur Taute, 'The Taute Papers', 'Notes on the passage of Boers who passed through the Southern Cape', unpublished, private archives of Mrs Daisy Taute, George, nd. Members of the OVR had served in Roberts Horse.

⁸⁰ Cape of Good Hope, *Government Gazette Notice 123*, 7 February 1901. The exception was a fight against a patrol led by Capt A Oliver of the West Australian Mounted Infantry.

Kritzinger and Smith met up with Johannes Cornelius Lötter of Pearston, who had taken part in operations at Colesberg a year before, and had recruited 150 colonists in the Midlands in January 1901.⁸⁵ Herbert's and Gorringer's Columns, plus the Grenadier Guards and 9th Lancers, drove the commandos from their base at the foot of Compassberg in the Sneeuberg on 22 February, as the Boers were not able to defend their position with small arms. After being shelled near Rooinek, Kritzinger broke south towards Pearston burning Roodehoogte Station on 25 February. Driven away from Fish River Station by an armoured train, Lötter joined forces with Kritzinger and Smith and rode south with Col H de B De Lisle's and Gorringer's Columns in pursuit. While Kritzinger overran a poorly defended Pearston, Lötter's men, high on excitement, sang and shouted to each other as they rode along. They attacked a police station at Darlington, looted a shop and smashed the telegraph at Sheldon Station.⁸⁶

It was in the Bedford and Fort Beaufort districts that the tempo increased. The Bedford District Mounted Troops suffered a serious reverse at Buffelskloof when Kritzinger's men killed Capt J Rennie and Tpr WD Ross of Cowie and Cpl J Edwards was seriously wounded; while 30 troopers were also captured in the Bavaiaan's Kloof near Bedford on 14 March 1901. Five troopers were wounded in a skirmish at Vogelstruisnek ten days later. However the Boer forces also sustained casualties when Johannes Gert Vorster of Springfontein, Middelburg was killed and N Watson of Bloemfontein captured.⁸⁷

Virtually only the other anxious moment for the commando was when Kritzinger's men were almost trapped against the flooded Elands River in the Tarkastad district at the end of March. Here they faced the first stumbling efforts of the Imperial troops, Colonial Defence Force and District Mounted Troops to combine against them. Luckily the river fell and the commando slipped away into the Bamboes Mountains. They also had the good fortune of capturing some cases of ammunition from the Tarkastad District Mounted Troops.⁸⁸

The pressure against the Boers began to increase daily as seven columns, now under Gen Inigo Jones, intent on driving Kritzinger back to the Free State, succeeded in pushing the Boers over the Rosemead-Stormberg railway line. The Boer leaders thoroughly alarmed at the number of horsemen keeping up the pursuit divided their laagers on 2 April to avoid being trapped simultaneously against another river. Lötter's commando and some men under Gert van Reenen of Steynsburg, who had also been skirmishing against colonial units and raiding Maraisburg at intervals,

⁸⁵ Malan, *Boere-offisiere*, p10; *Eastern Province Herald*, 'Attack at Fish River', 19 September 1901.

⁸⁶ CAR, ZP 21/1/375, Report of D May, Asst CC of Pearston, 3 March, 1901; *De Graaff Reinetter*, 11 March 1901.

⁸⁷ CAR, D/D 1/72 2515, Extract of Daily Diary, No 1 area; *South African Field Force Casualty List*, Section January to July 1901, Col Defence Force, General, pp100-01.

⁸⁸ RD McDonald and PH Kritzinger, *In die Skaduwee van die Dood*, p45; *Oudtshoorn Courant*, 21 March 1901.

crossed the Orange River on rafts.⁸⁹ Meanwhile Kritzinger demonstrated his extraordinary mobility as he doubled back and took refuge in the Zuurberge.

Daniel Scheepers of Upsal, Somerset East, who joined Kritzinger in early April with 53 other rebels, was horrified by the commandos' general lack of tactics and poor strategy. He said that as Kritzinger was the Superior Officer in command of the Cape Colony, all the troops were chasing them. But the Boer commandos did not support each other; instead they tried to get as far as possible away from Kritzinger. He claimed that it was always the same men that fought, and only about a quarter of the poorer classes ever took part in the fighting and others were just there for the loot.⁹⁰

Kritzinger raced for the Orange River from Spitzkop with the columns in close pursuit. Farmers reported that the Boers started with three horses each, and reached the river three nights later with only one.⁹¹ He then received orders from De Wet to return to the Free State and reorganise the remnants of the commandos there. He crossed the river with 54 men, and all the coffee, sugar and supplies he could commandeer. Fouché and Smith, who remained in the north-east Cape, kept on the move with the columns at their heels.⁹²

The situation changed dramatically as the weather turned bitterly cold. The winter of 1901 was later regarded as one of the coldest in many years. Many burghers also returned to the Free State, saying they were sick of being chased and would not return.⁹³ The ability of the Boer commandos to scatter, fight and regroup had naturally first frustrated the columns who, attempted to capture them through hind pursuit, chasing them in all directions. Now a process of adaption to the extensive terrain, the movements of the sun and the tactics of the commandos had occurred and although there had been no major captures, the morale of the columns had gone up.

Scheepers and Fouché

Scheepers and Fouché, separated from Kritzinger near Oudtshoorn, trekked around in the Karoo. They returned to Aberdeen on 5 March, and decided to capture an army camp near the village. The attack petered out after Lieut Johannes Nel of Bethulie was wounded, and it was decided to loot the undefended village instead. The Boers raided the stables, released the prisoners in the gaol and recruited nineteen rebels but they left the village precipitously after the Town Guard crept along the

⁸⁹ CAR, ZP 21/1/375, Report of Maraisburg Magistrate, 11 March 1901; *Somerset Budget*, 3 April 1901.

⁹⁰ *Somerset Budget*, 'Commandant D du P Scheepers' Memoirs', 26 May 1962.

⁹¹ *Midland News*, 17 April 1901; McDonald and Kritzinger, *In die Skaduwee van die Dood*, p85.

⁹² *Somerset Budget*, 'Commandant D du P Scheepers' Memoirs', 3 June 1962.

⁹³ Marthinus Johannes van Heerden's memoirs on tape, 1971. Private Archives of Mrs K Steyn, Port Elizabeth.

water furrow undetected and fired a volley at them.⁹⁴ That afternoon a column under Sir Charles Parsons, operating in the area, arrived to take control of the situation.

Parsons, a traditional officer of the old school, completely underestimated the fighting skills of Scheepers, Fouché and their men. He ordered three mounted patrols, small but visible, to make contact with the Boers; two of which were over-run on the outskirts of the village. The Boers killed four, wounded eight and captured three local guides and thirteen members of the Inniskilling Dragoon Guards and Imperial Yeomanry. Nine Dragoons from the third patrol reached the village safely by creeping up the Kraai River back to Aberdeen with their rifles when their ammunition ran out.⁹⁵ Lieut-Col Harry Scobell, OC of 1st Brabant's who took up the pursuit, had a totally different attitude to Parsons as he studied the Boers' guerilla tactics and adapted his own. While indecisive skirmishes took place between the two forces, he kept on chasing the commandos and waited for reinforcements - planning to encircle them.⁹⁶

Meanwhile Fouché and Scheepers, both in a buoyant mood, were making their way to the Sundays River looking for grazing for their horses when they met up with a small party of about 40 men, led by Capt Wynand Malan of the *Theron's Verkenners Korps* that had been cut off from De Wet during February 1901.⁹⁷ The enormous excitement for the Fouché and Scheepers men in this meeting with Malan, and the ZARP policeman Manie Maritz, also in the party, cannot be over emphasised. Scheepers rode on towards the Sundays later in an excited mood. The men shouted greetings to people they met along the roads as they passed, and sang commando songs. To the amazed farmers they behaved like a large hunting party and not men at war, it was said later.⁹⁸ That night these farmers who lived nearby, lured by the sight of the Boers camping with impunity along the Sundays River, appeared with food and drink. The Boers, now busy recruiting, made light of the war and were careless about keeping watch. At dawn Scobell's force attacked from three sides.

Fouché was the first to collect up his men and made his get-away through Nieu Bethesda and he decided to join Kritzinger's Commando in the Cradock district. Scheepers' Commando split into two sections: one under Lieut F Swanepoel fled into the Coetzeeberg in the Somerset East district, while Scheepers, with Judge Hugo and the rest of his men, took refuge in the Camdeboo Mountains. When they reached safety they looked battered and bruised, their clothes were torn to threads on the *norsdoring* thorns, and their mounts were wounded and lame. Their spare horses had been captured. Scheepers was surprisingly depressed for a fighter with a reputation for being a young firebrand, and

⁹⁴ CAR, ZP 21/1/375, Report of G Greene, CC, 12 March, 1901; US, Fourie, 23/2 and 23/1, *Geburtenissen te Aberdeen en Omgewing Gedurende de Oorlog Operaties*; FAR, SO/POW, JJ Nel of Bethulie, no 18055, 5 March 1901.

⁹⁵ *South African Field Force Casualty List*, Section January to July 1901, 17th Battalion Imperial Yeomanry, p20; 18 Battalion Imperial Yeomanry, p22; Major ES Jackson, *Inniskilling Dragoons. The Records of an old Heavy Cavalry Regiment*, p5; Gilbert, *Rhodesia and After*, p179.

⁹⁶ *Graaff-Reinet Advertiser*, 15 March 1901.

⁹⁷ Killian, 'Die Verhaal van Francois Jacobus Retief', unpublished, p12.

ironically predicted his own end when he complained that, "coming to the Colony was a fruitless exercise". About 34 rebel recruits from Blaauwkrantz and Uitkomst were captured by Scobell, were later disfranchised at Cradock under the Indemnity and Special Tribunals Act for five years as Class 2 rebels.⁹⁹

Malan took the Jansenville reverse calmly, and rested in the Camdeboo as his men dug thorns out of their horses and themselves.¹⁰⁰ At the end of March Malan and Scheepers swung into action and captured Maj D Arbuthnot, leading a force of Imperial Yeomanry near Klein Kariegas, and stripped them of rifles, bandoleers, clothes and boots.¹⁰¹ On 6 April 1901 they scored their greatest triumph when they killed four men and captured Capt FB Stapelton Bretherton and 80 men of all ranks of the 5th Lancers, Imperial Yeomanry, and Nesbitt's Horse at Zeekoeirivier (Newlands) in the Camdeboo and only Lieut Fletcher and 25 men got away.¹⁰² Once more they kept their horses, rifles and ammunition, and smashed weapons they did not want. Malan said he regretted not having a gaol to keep the prisoners incarcerated, and boasted he thought it possible to capture the entire SA Field Force.¹⁰³

Then three rebels appeared in the Camdeboo with a letter from Gen De Wet requesting a commandant to lead a rebellion in the northwest Cape. Malan generously suggested that Maritz head the expedition and he left for Brandvlei in mid-April with a small party.¹⁰⁴ This expedition would owe its success in the sparsely inhabited northwest to Manie Maritz' ability to recruit and organise his men and resources effectively in the extensive areas.

The scattering of the commandos

The commandos, who had worked so well in concert, then split, eager to spearhead a general rising on their own turf. At the end of April 1901 Malan moved to the Cradock district where he built up a reputation as a highly mobile and skilled guerilla fighter, and clashed with Crewe's and Scobell's Columns at Garstlandskloof on 24 April, at Doornkop on 1 May where he captured a supply of ammunition, and at Kaffirsleegte on 12 May. He had a serious set back on 19 May when Scobell, with fresh remounts, surprised his laager and he fled, losing 38 horses and precious saddles as well as 500

⁹⁸ *Oudtshoorn Courant*, 4 April 1901.

⁹⁹ *Oudtshoorn Courant*, 4 April 1901; CAR, AG 2098, List of persons who have joined the enemy from Jansenville; US, AG 2117 Class 2 rebels disfranchised for five years.

¹⁰⁰ *Somerset Budget*, 23 March 1901; SU, AG 2117, Class 2 rebels disfranchised for five years in Cradock, March 1902;

¹⁰¹ FAR, Van Heerden papers, R155/194/1. Duplicate report book, originally belonged to Arbuthnot.

¹⁰² Major Herbert Shute, 2nd Battalion Coldstream Guards, 'My Diary of the War in South Africa – October 1899 to October 1902', private archives of the Graaff-Reinet Men's Club, 6-11 April 1901.

¹⁰³ Pieterse, *Oorlogsavonture van Genl Wynand Malan*, p195.

¹⁰⁴ Maritz, *My Lewa en Strewe*, p30.

rounds of ammunition, dearly earned at Doornkop.¹⁰⁵ Malan suffered further severe loss when his right-hand man and best shot, Lieut Cornelius Willem Cloete of Johannesburg, was dangerously wounded in the leg and left behind at Betjeskraal.¹⁰⁶ Shortly afterwards Malan met up with Hendrik Lategan and Japie Naser, as well as Johannes Smith of the OFS *Artillerie*, who had returned to the Cape Colony. Lategan's men had been remounted with CMR horses captured at Popkloof near Middelburg on 23 May 1901. The three commandos trekked towards Richmond.¹⁰⁷

Scheepers had also left the Camdeboo and he was searching for Lieut Fanie Swanepoel and about 60 men of his commando, who had lost touch after the fight in the *norsdorings*. This party had been raiding farms near Nelspoort for fresh horses and once they were remounted decided to return to the Free State without making contact with Scheepers. They had reached Nieu Bethesda without incident at the end of April, following the route that Fouché had taken. However Lieut-Col D Haig had pulled a cordon around Middelburg and turned Swanepoel who was forced back into the Coetzeeberg.¹⁰⁸

The Somerset East district then became the focus of clashes between Scheepers and Henniker's Column. This was true guerilla warfare - small indeterminate clashes and never a decisive action. Virtually all the farmers had moved into Somerset East for protection or under duress. The skirmishes - mostly shoot and scoot - occurred around deserted farmhouses in a silent winter landscape. When Scheepers reached Stockdale he sent a message into Somerset East that the owner Dr HJ Moolman, was to come out and attend him. When the local Commandant, Capt L Llewellyn, refused to allow Moolman to leave the village, Scheepers burnt Stockdale down on 23 April. He had found a medical diary in the house, and entered the names of the 151 men in his commando in it. From this list it seemed that by far the majority were colonial rebels, and that most of the Free Staters who had entered the Cape Colony with him in December 1900 were no longer riding with him.¹⁰⁹

A new recruit, Pieter du Randt of Grootfontein Somerset East, was killed nine days after joining Scheepers' Commando.¹¹⁰ He was among the 163 rebels killed or who died of wounds during 1901/1902.¹¹¹ Although some youngsters lost their lives through inexperience, many were cautious and dangerous fighters who grew up on the hunting field. Another incident occurred at Stellenboshvlei at Murraysburg that illustrates how dangerous youngsters could be; Kitchener's Fighting Scouts were in hot pursuit of a group of young rebels under Capt Wynand Malan in March 1901, the rebels doubled back near the farm. Capt Boyd King and his troop then dismounted and

¹⁰⁵ *Somerset Budget*, 4 May 1901; *Oudtshoorn Courant*, 25 May 1901.

¹⁰⁶ Erasmus, 'Wedevaringe van Joseph Erasmus', Private archives of PB Erasmus, Noordburg, p97.

¹⁰⁷ *Midland News*, 27 May 1901; Wessels (ed), *Die Oorlogsherinneringe van Kommandant Jacob Petrus Naser*, p61; Williams, *Record of the Cape Mounted Riflemen*, p102.

¹⁰⁸ *Oudtshoorn Courant*, 2 May 1901.

¹⁰⁹ War Museum of the Boer Republics, Ref 193, Scheepers' Commando lists, 24 April 1901.

¹¹⁰ CAR, AG 2097, Magistrate of Somerset East, List of persons who have joined the enemy; Letter from R du Randt, Pearston.

packed stones as a defensive barrier. Throwing caution to the wind, two new recruits, Petrus Pienaar and 13-year-old Frikkie van Zyl, raced up towards the position. King wounded and killed young Van Zyl and wounded Pienaar. Riding some distance behind them was Ben Burger of Gabrielsbaken, Murraysburg who hid behind a boulder and held his fire. He waited until he saw King's hat come into view and shot him in the eye at a short distance. He was fourteen years old. In the fracas that followed Trooper Beard was also killed.¹¹²

On 8 May at Mortimer, Scheepers' Commando destroyed sections of the railway track to Port Elizabeth, hoping to derail a train *en route* to Cradock carrying arms and ammunition. However the down train, carrying wool bales, derailed instead.¹¹³ Scheepers then decided to attack Tarkastad, but was turned back at Daggaboer's Nek and his men, desperate for food, looted shops in Pearston and moved back into the mountains with the column behind them.¹¹⁴ They threw off the pursuit and rode to Bo-Rietvlei planning to reunite with Swanepoel and his men on 9 May 1901, but Swanepoel was killed on the farm in an unexpected clash with the Midland Mounted Rifles just before Scheepers arrived. Swanepoel's death was a tragedy for Scheepers, who likened him to Cmdt Danie Theron and other Boer heroes.¹¹⁵

The distraught and angry Scheepers then turned his back on the freezing Coetzeeberg and sent twenty men to wreck the passenger train from Port Elizabeth near Marais Siding, on 21 May. They found horseshoes and nails, but there were no desperately needed arms or ammunition on board.¹¹⁶ Next he attacked Willowmore, but the village was garrisoned and all sections of the population fought back vigorously, so he then withdrew to Murraysburg.

Murraysburg, having failed to raise a Town Guard, was not garrisoned and fell into a no man's land as far as both the military in Graaff-Reinet and Beaufort West were concerned. Between February and June 1901 the commandos commandeered supplies from the shops as well as livestock; they also consulted a local doctor, Dr Martin Heinrich, who attended to the sick and wounded.¹¹⁷

The leadership of the Commandant in an insurgent force is of paramount importance, and when the vigorous Scheepers became withdrawn and silent, the morale of his men dropped. His iron control slipped and they were seen drinking for the first time something he would not have tolerated earlier. Hans Steyl said they noticed how newcomers to the commando no longer had to boil their

¹¹¹ David and Taffy Shearing, 'The Rebel Record', unpublished.

¹¹² Pieterse, *Oorlogsavonture van Genl Wynand Malan*, p175; Pers com, Mr Bennie Roussouw of Murraysburg, 1976. Pieterse states 22 dead and wounded. The *South African Field Force Casualty List*, Section January to June 1900, for Kitchener's Fighting Scouts, two killed and two wounded. King and Beard are buried on Stellenboschvlei. Van Zyl died of wounds in the Green Point hospital.

¹¹³ *Eastern Province Herald*, 14 March 1955.

¹¹⁴ CAR, D/D 1/72 2242, Daily Diary, No3 area, 8 May 1901.

¹¹⁵ Preller, *Scheepers se Dagboek en die Stryd in Kaapland*, p100.

¹¹⁶ *Graaff-Reinet Advertiser*, 23 May 1901; CAR, Cd 981, *The Trial of Cmdt Gideon Scheepers*, 8th and 15th Charges.

¹¹⁷ NAR, FK 807, report of RM and CC of Murraysburg, 13 July 1901.

clothes. Formerly 'Cappy' was very strict, he said, and fought body lice obsessively. Now he did not seem to notice and body lice irritated them for the first time.¹¹⁸

A hundred Boers swept into Murraysburg on 14 June, commandeered from the shops and for the first time became abusive towards the shopkeepers' wives. Later that night eight drunken rebels under Schalk Pypers broke into the Bank house, assaulted the Standard Bank Manager, Mr Frank Lilford, and forced him to hand over £120-7-9 from the bank's funds.¹¹⁹ More men ransacked the shops, bullied the schoolteachers and threatened people in their homes. On 27 June Scheepers appeared and informed the Magistrate that if the military did not garrison the place within eight days he would burn the public buildings down. The question can well be asked why would Scheepers invite the military of all people to take over Murraysburg?

There is no logical reason for many of Scheepers' actions from this point on. While some of the things he did appear bizarre, they can be understood in context of combat stress, an unrecognised reality of the South African War. Only if we accept that Scheepers had been influenced by war, the most traumatic event human beings can experience, do we have some insight into events that unfolded in this commando in the months that followed.¹²⁰

On 6 July Scheepers reappeared and ordered his men to burn the Murraysburg Magistrate's Office and other public buildings, shops and some houses. There were 200 rifles in the Court House loft that had been surrendered under the Disarmament Act, and Scheepers told the townspeople they could remove their firearms. When the Magistrate warned them against this the firearms were left in the loft and burnt out. The Murraysburg shops, which had supplied the commando, largely on promissory notes, were burnt down too. The military turned a deaf ear to the Magistrate's pleas for help, and ordered him to leave for Cape Town.¹²¹ Scheepers declared Murraysburg Orange Free State territory, and rode on to Vleiplaats, a farm nearby belonging to AJ Herholdt, former Secretary for Agriculture in the Schreiner Government, and torched that as well.¹²² About 150 civilians then fled from Murraysburg, leaving only a few old pensioners behind in the village under the care of Dr Heinrich.¹²³

Three days before burning down the Magistrate's Court Scheepers wrote to Gen De Wet. The end of this letter, with its affirmation of patriotism, is widely quoted, "When I think of the brave men

¹¹⁸ Pers com, Mr Hennie Steyl of George repeating a family story of Hans Steyl who was in Scheepers' Commando, 6 May 2000.

¹¹⁹ F Lilford, private letter, property of DL de Villiers, La-De-Da, Beaufort West, 14 June 1901; Carolyn Terry, *A Pioneer Bank in a Pioneer Land*, p225. Lilford was the only Bank Manager assaulted by the Boer forces, who usually treated bank managers with great respect.

¹²⁰ Hugh McManners, *The Scars of War*, p78, a study of war trauma.

¹²¹ NAR, FK 807, Report from Hely-Hutchinson to Chamberlain, 13 July 1901; Report of Magistrate of Murraysburg, 13-7-1901; *Reuters Special Services*, Richmond Road, 9 July 1901.

¹²² Pers com, Vorster who was six year old when his father took a portmanteau from Sharwood's shop before it was set alight. He watched Vleiplaats burning from a kopje.

¹²³ *Graaff-Reinet Advertiser*, 27 July 1901.

who have sacrificed their lives I feel like fighting to the death rather than that their blood should flow uselessly".¹²⁴ However the haunting opening sentences in the same letter does not usually appear in print, perhaps because it reveals that the young Scheepers, isolated and stressed, seemed to have a persecution complex.

"Cmdt de Wet

"It seems your honour has forgotten me as I have been in the Colony for seven months and I have not received a word from your honour. I am convinced another commandant is keeping reports back. They are with Cmdt Kritzingen who does not worry to let us know."¹²⁵

This discussion is academic now: what was important to the rebels under him then, was that Scheepers' legendary leadership was slipping away.

Reorganization of the columns

When the Colonial Defence Force failed to round up the commandos quickly, Lord Kitchener was furious with Gen EY Brabant, in command of the CDF, but later, realising the extent of the problem, he ordered Sir John French down to Middelburg to take overall command of field operations in the Cape Colony on 1 June.¹²⁶ The first priority of the nine reorganized columns fielding 5,000 mounted men was to drive the Boer commandos out of the Albert and Wodehouse districts and over the Orange River. They ignored the commandos under Scheepers, Malan and Lategan for the time being, and sent a small force under Maj Hugh Jeudwine to deal with Maritz and Conroy in the northwest Cape.¹²⁷

Because many Free Staters had return home the majority of the commandos mainly consisted of younger and inexperienced Cape rebels who outnumbered the experienced republicans. The warning by the Military that heavier punishments were going to be enforced if they were captured in the field appeared to be ignored as reports came in that rebels were still being recruited; an example was the four sons of Godlieb Maritz of Maraisburg, who joined the Boers at the end of April.¹²⁸

Apart from the reorganisation of the columns, the CDF and the Irregular Forces were becoming better organised. Town Guards raised in 52 towns by March 1901 included 112 men at Paarl, 172 at Worcester, 132 at Burghersdorp, 377 at Cradock and 136 at Somerset East. From April 1901 coloured men joined the Town Guards, and would become the backbone of the service

¹²⁴ Fransjohan Pretorius, 'Afrikaner Nationalism and the Burgher on Commando', in Cuthbertson, Greg, Grundlingh, Albert and Suttie, MaryLynn, *Writing a Wider War*, p70.

¹²⁵ *SA News Weekly*, 28 September 1901, 'Letter from Scheepers to De Wet'.

¹²⁶ Amery (ed), *The Times History*, V, pp311-12.

¹²⁷ A Wessels (ed), *Egodokumente*, p53, 'The Anglo-Boer War diary of Major HS Jeudwine'.

¹²⁸ CAR, 1/CDK 8/23, 2 May 1901, Report TD Pretorius of Maraisburg, 17 April 1901.

upcountry.¹²⁹ While extensive operations were beyond the scope of the District Mounted Troops they were excellent scouts that kept the commandos on the move. The hit and run tactics of the insurgents caused considerable destruction on farms, but apart from Pearston, Jamestown and Richmond the Boers did not succeed in entering a village once it was garrisoned.

The focus of guerilla warfare in the Colony moved to the north-eastern Cape where Fouché was outrunning and outwitting Col CP Crewe. On 19 April Fouché looted oxen and forage from a train near Stormberg.¹³⁰ On 9 May his rebel forces wrecked a supply train at Rayner Siding.¹³¹ A series of running skirmishes took place at Spitskop near Vlekpoort on 17 April and in a thunderstorm at Henning Siding.¹³² The fight went on to Kissieberg on 23 April, and at Rietpoort in the Steynsburg district on 29 April.¹³³ The skirmish at Koppiesfontein, Albert on 20 May 1901 demonstrated how useless conventional tactics were in countering a guerilla offensive. Col Eyre Crabbe, Grenadier Guards, an officer of the old school, favoured a terrain where his guns could be manoeuvred easily. As only two Boers were killed in April and May, and four others were captured, the war could go on forever.¹³⁴

Nevertheless there was a crisis as the commandos in the northeast had almost run out of ammunition. A rumour spread that a supply of arms and ammunition for the use of the colonial forces was stored in a fort at Jamestown. Kritzinger, who had returned from the Free State, collected up all available ammunition, and handed it out to 50 picked men who were ordered to attack the Jamestown fort on 2 June 1901. The fort was captured after two hours, and four men in the local force, the Dordrecht District Volunteer Guard, were killed and the Town Guard in the trenches surrendered. The single Boer casualty was a Free Stater, L Myburgh, who was accidentally shot in the back by his own men as he was wearing a khaki coat to keep out the cold.¹³⁵

The officers under Kritzinger were thankfully dividing out the 30,000 captured rounds of ammunition to all the commandos including to Lategan's and Van Reenen's commandos, when rebels belonging to Hendrik Bester and Gert Myburgh's Commandos began looting shops and then broke into the Jamestown Hotel. When Fouché appeared in the village and discovered what was happening he was furious and whipped the Boers who were drinking in the streets, and shouted at them that they were bringing danger down on them all. He ordered his commando out of the village. However many men were still lying drunk near the Hotel when the Tasmanians under Gorringe appeared and started shelling from the hillside. These soldiers had looted the Nek Hotel, and, with discipline forgotten on

¹²⁹ CAR, D/D 1/70 790, Brabant to Sprigg, 28 February 1901.

¹³⁰ CAR, D/D 1/72 2515, Daily Diary, 19 April 1901.

¹³¹ *George and Knysna Herald*, 5 May 1901.

¹³² Du Plessis, *Oomblikke van Spanning*, p44.

¹³³ J Haywood and D Hall, *South African War Honours and Awards*, p69.

¹³⁴ FAR, SO/POW, no 24514. Blignaut had fought under Lategan and had been with Van Reenen when he entered Maraisburg on 9 March 1901. He was sentenced to five years on Bermuda.

both sides, the men became locked in a drunken brawl from which Myburgh's and Bester's men fled, leaving behind all the arms, ammunition and clothing they had only just acquired.¹³⁶

The Boer forces scattered and Kritzinger and Lötter rode hard towards Lady Grey until they reached a vacated farm Wildefontein where they rested for three days in a deep hollow 25 miles (40 kms) away from Jamestown.¹³⁷ At that point the CMR under Lukin had returned from campaigning in the Free State as a result of Sprigg's many requests to Kitchener. A combined force under Col Scobell, consisting of the 9th Lancers under Follet and the CMR under Lukin had been raised and they tracked down Kritzinger's commando.

Scobell used a new tactic: a night attack with small arms, and without field guns to give the surprise away. Lukin put it into action spurring his horse down the steep slopes to Wildefontein at 3am on 6 June. He and his orderly dashed into a group of sleepy Boers, seizing their rifles with the column close behind.¹³⁸ Scobell's Column captured eighteen rebels, 167 horses, 25 rifles and 12,000 rounds of ammunition, as well as other stores.¹³⁹ The commando fled in all direction and Kritzinger rode towards Cradock his numbers reduced to 276, including 28 armed coloured groom.¹⁴⁰ The morale of the defenders rose, while that of the rebels dropped. They were now being chased by the dreaded CMR, who had caught them asleep. Even more disquieting was the news that filtered back to the commando later was that the captured rebels were facing charges of common law murder.

Among the prisoners were Willem and Hendrik Steyn of Cradock, who were sent to Bermuda. Johannes Coetzee of Cradock, Frederick Marais of Middelburg and Cornelius Claasen of Somerset East¹⁴¹ were sentenced to death under Martial Law.¹⁴² From then on Scobell and Lukin would display a preference for capturing rebels at night.

Other column commanders found the idea of capturing rebels asleep most appealing. Col WP Wyndham of the 17th Lancers received a report that Van Reenen's Commando was at Ruigtevlei about six miles (ten kms) from Steynsburg. It was bitterly cold and these Boers had become careless. Myndert Bornman, an escaped prisoner-of-war, returned to the farm and was appalled to find nobody had put sentries out. Van Reenen said the weather outside was too cold for the Khaki. He was wrong as the 17th Lancers waited until it was dark and then surprised him. One of his men was killed and 22 were captured, many of them so sound asleep that the Lancers had to wake them up.¹⁴³

¹³⁵ Du Plessis, *Oomblikke van Spanning*, p53; *Somerset Budget*, 'Commandant D du P Scheepers' Memoirs', 26 May 1962.

¹³⁶ Oosthuizen, *Rebelle van die Stormberge*, pp148-49.

¹³⁷ *Somerset Budget*, 'Commandant D du P Scheepers' Memoirs', 26 May, 1962; Steyn, 'Kaapse Rebel te Bermuda', pp18-19.

¹³⁸ Steyn, 'Kaapse Rebel te Bermuda', p20; *Frontier Guardian*, 14 June 1910.

¹³⁹ Williams, *Record of the Cape Mounted Riflemen*, p104.

¹⁴⁰ *Grocott's Penny Mail*, 18 June 1901.

¹⁴¹ Details in Chapter 4.

¹⁴² FAR, SO/POW, Prisoners of War in Cape and Natal; CAR, Cd981, Death Penalties Inflicted.

¹⁴³ Buurman (pseudonym), *Oorlogswolke oor die Republiek*, p200.

For some weeks Van Reenen was relentlessly pursued and then fled becoming the first of many commandants to flee the Eastern Cape. Col Haig of the 17th Lancers and other columns pursued the remnant until they were over the Orange River, and then let them go. Van Reenen slipped back into the Colony and appeared with 90 rebels in the Calvinia district on 29 October 1901, but a third of his men were reported to be unarmed.¹⁴⁴

After Kritzinger was surprised at Wildefontein the troops concentrated on capturing Fouché, and for five days five corps pursued him closely. Thanks to his remarkable eyesight, strict discipline and ability to outguess his opponents, his men kept ahead of their pursuers as they raced through the Burghersdorp district.¹⁴⁵

From June 1901 Gen French introduced new mass tactics, combining the columns for greater effectiveness. All commandos in the vicinity of the Orange River were to be driven north out of the Colony. Further south all commandos were to be driven in a westerly direction over the Cape Town/Bloemfontein railway line until the Midlands were clear. Both Scheepers and Malan had benefited from this lack of attention. On 25 June 1901 Malan, working with Capt Johannes Smith, attacked Richmond for the second time. While the 4th North Staffordshire Regiment and 50 Town Guards garrisoned the ten sangars around the village, the main attack was directed at the Gaol fort manned by coloured Town Guards. They said flatly they would never surrender, as the Boers would shoot them. Five members of the garrison were killed defending the four sangars that were captured. Capt Smith was accidentally wounded in the face and leg by one of Malan's men before he retired at the approach of 2nd Brabants Horse.¹⁴⁶ Smith was on crutches for many months, and he moved to the northwest Cape to avoid the intensive pursuit by the columns, and was basically sidelined.

Malan and Judge Hugo, with a small party, set off from the Graaff-Reinet district for the Orange Free State on 10 July 1901 to discuss the plight of the Cape rebels with Gen De Wet and President Steyn. He wanted Steyn to proclaim the area where the commandos were trekking part of the Orange Free State, making the rebel a legitimate belligerent who could not be tried for treason.¹⁴⁷ The idea of the Free State annexing regions in the Cape Colony had come to nought the previous year, and the result of the expedition was that Malan was absent during the critical time of the next three months when the very future of the guerilla forces hung in the balance.

¹⁴⁴ NAR, FK 2111, Weekly Intelligence Report, 29 August 1901.

¹⁴⁵ War Museum of the Boer Republics, 4299/4, Anon diary, 7-10 June, pp39-40; Oosthuizen, *Rebelle van die Stormberge*, p174.

¹⁴⁶ *Beaufort Courier*, 13 July 1901; *South African Field Force Casualty List*, Section 4, North Staffordshire Regiment, p71 and Town Guard, p118; Pieterse, *Oorlogsavonture van Genl Wynand Malan*, pp222-25.

¹⁴⁷ Pieterse, *Oorlogsavonture van Genl Wynand Malan*, p234.

Scheepers driven out of the Camdeboo

Scheepers returned to the Camdeboo and reported to Gen De Wet that 40 Free Staters remained in his commando of 240 men; he would spend the winter in the mountains and when the first rains fell would ride west.¹⁴⁸ The rebels knew that French had taken control of the columns in the Cape Colony, and had heard rumours that he was planning to capture them. They thought it a joke. Scheepers and his men had become isolated and were about to pay the price of being guerillas with predictable habits.

Gen French lulled Scheepers into a false sense of security while he organised four columns to surround Scheepers' camps at Langfontein and Middelplaats. He gave the CMR and 9th Lancers a week's holiday to play sport. Then Scobell trekked out of Graaff-Reinet with heavy transport wagons to mislead Scheepers. They trekked for 24 hours before they reached Onbedacht in the Camdeboo. From there the CMR, led by Lukin, began a drive up to Langfontein, the site of one of the laagers. The startled Boers did not defend their camp; as their rumoured fortifications did not exist. Lieut Izak Liebenberg was captured with nineteen men, most of them rebels, trying to get his stragglers out.¹⁴⁹ With Scheepers in the lead, the commando fled under cover of the thick mist to Aberdeen Road Station and then proceeded towards the Murraysburg district.¹⁵⁰

Twenty-nine prisoners were brought into Graaff-Reinet, including two aliens, Hendrik Veenstra and Frederick Toy; eight of them would be executed.¹⁵¹ Scheepers had suffered a heavy blow with the capture of Izak Liebenberg, his lieutenant. He had earlier informed the local farmers that he would remain in the Camdeboo for the winter, and the loss of this refuge weakened his position.¹⁵²

First drive

On 18 July 1901 five columns began a massive drive in line from Beaufort West to Graaff-Reinet. Scheepers' men slipped through the cordon towards Nelspoort, and attacked a train at Ganna Siding north of Beaufort West on 21 July 1901. Seven soldiers were killed or died of wounds while 21 others were wounded. The conductor got away and raised the alarm with the result an armoured train surprised the rebels unpacking the goods van. Scheepers used a heliograph found on the train to

¹⁴⁸ *SA News Weekly*, 3 July 1901.

¹⁴⁹ *SA News Weekly*, 3 July 1901; Williams, *Record of the Cape Mounted Riflemen*, p104.

¹⁵⁰ HM Downes, 'Idle Memoirs of a Wanderer', Unpublished, Chapter 4, p11.

¹⁵¹ KBA, Cd 981, Death Penalties Inflicted; Jordaan, *Só Het Hulle Gesterf*, Reprint, pp11-12, 14 & 31.

¹⁵² *Oudtshoorn Courant*, 17 July 1901.

signal the pursuing column that he had trekked west over the railway line near Nelspoort, while in fact he trekked rapidly toward the southeast.¹⁵³

This left Lategan's Commando in the Midlands and CMR scouts tracked them to Tweefontein on the Richmond road. This commando had swelled to 100 men, mainly rebels, and was well horsed and well equipped. It was V/C Japie Naser who became agitated after two days at Tweefontein, and asked Lategan to move on, but he objected, as he was ill. At dawn on 20 July the troopers under Lukin raced through the poplar grove that surrounded the farm, drove the horses off and left the commando virtually dismounted. Ten rebels were captured. Naser, who was wounded, became so angry at Lategan's refusal to counter-attack at Zuurpoort that he split from his commando, and, after he recovered, operated in the Sutherland district. Many men in the commando walked to the Free State and did not return. However V/C Hofmeyr continued making daring raids into the Colesberg from the Free State until he was captured in October near Philipstown. Lategan too then led the remainder of his men into less risky and more isolated areas such as Kakamas, and began operating along the Orange River.¹⁵⁴ There was little strategic value for Lategan in the long run in this isolated region, but he had survived over twenty months of war when many others had been killed or captured. A period of rest and recreation set in for his commando.

From June 1901 French's tactics of surprise attacks without the aid of field guns meant that the squadrons travelled faster and were quieter. For the rebels this meant that they never knew when a squadron might storm down on them. The columns stopped using Cape carts, which were easy to track, and used pack mules instead, also enabling them to cover more difficult terrains. Scouts now worked ahead of the columns, sometimes by as much as 30 miles (48 kms), to locate the commandos. The country had also been divided into squares, and the squadrons, aided by the District Mounted Troops, scoured the countryside for commandos. Certain battalions of Imperial Yeomanry, who were so easy to capture earlier, had returned to England, and a much harder, more determined force had replaced them.¹⁵⁵

But the commandos could still surprise isolated squadrons. Kritzing and Lötter surprised the Midland Mounted Rifles on 19 June near Kaalplaas, Cradock, and killing eight outright and wounding seven, who later died of wounds.¹⁵⁶ Kitchener and French then turned their attention to driving Kritzing out of the Colony. At the end of July twenty squadrons from Maraisburg to Mortimer moved south and opened up their fronts. They turned, closed their fronts and swept the commandos ahead of them, while a stream of heliographers kept up situation reports. Hunting for horses, Kritzing worked his way into the Bamboes Mountains, south of Maraisburg, and tried to break

¹⁵³ Smith, *Ek Rebelleer*, pp35-36; *Beaufort West Courier*, 9 January 1902.

¹⁵⁴ Wessels (eds), *Die Oorlogsherinneringe van Kommandant Jacob Petrus Naser*, pp65-68.

¹⁵⁵ *The Mercury*, Hobart, 7 July, 6 August, 20 August 1901, 'Letters from Lieut Bisdee'.

¹⁵⁶ Taffy and David Shearing, *Commandant Johannes Lötter and his Rebels*, p18.

south, but the 17th Lancers turned him. He tried to double back, but this time Crabbe's Column, Marshall's Horse and the Prince Alfred's Guard blocked his route.

That night parties of Boers numbering 50 or less broke through the new blockhouse line that now ran along the railway between Rosmead and Stormberg Junction. Kritzinger, reinforced by Erasmus, a Johannesburg lawyer, and Cmdt Ephraim Lion-Cachet, met the tough Louis Wessels of Vrede with 22 men carrying despatches from Gen De Wet ordering him not under any circumstances to leave the Cape Colony. But Kritzinger was defeated at Ruiterskraal on 14 August. Cmdt Lion-Cachet was killed, and Daan Scheepers was rescued by his men with a fractured femur and hidden away. Cmdt Joseph Erasmus was captured. Kritzinger later reported a loss of 26 killed, wounded and captured, and reached the Orange River under such close pursuit that he had not unsaddled for 48 hours. Louis Wessels collected up the stragglers and followed Kritzinger, whose power had been shattered at Ruiterskraal, into the Free State.¹⁵⁷

The flaw in always relying on top fighters was now revealed. Lion-Cachet was no more and Scheepers lay in the veld for ten weeks until his leg had healed, but there were few junior officers among the rebels to really rally the Boers when a crisis arose. Kritzinger was kept out of the Cape Colony by vigilant patrols along the Orange River. He slipped through the cordon in December, and got as far as a blockhouse line near Hanover Road Station.¹⁵⁸ Here he was wounded in the chest going to the aid of a dismounted burgher. He stood trial for the murder of black scouts, but was acquitted and remained a POW for the rest of the war. Militarily speaking he had ceased to be of importance in the war in the Cape Colony after 14 August 1901.

The fight in the north-eastern Cape

Fouché criss-crossed the Stormberg, Zuurberge, Witteberge and Drakensberg mountain ranges from May until the end of July, and came into contact with the SA Field Force 32 times.¹⁵⁹ He moved constantly, and during those three months the commando did not remain on a farm for a day and a half of the 86 days - he moved up to three times in one day. He did his own scouting and got up at night to check that the men on guard duty were alert, even if they had ridden 30 miles (48 kms) during the day. He had a quality, an instinct, to discern through the fog of war what was about to happen. Fouché, with Myburgh's help, triumphed against the Connaught Rangers, who lost seven killed and 29 wounded at Zuurvlakte, Aliwal North on 14 July 1901. The Connaught Rangers and Fouché clashed twice more, but forearmed they were harder to surprise. On 26 July Fouché's attempt to capture their convoy failed when Col SC Monro appeared and scattered the commando with his

¹⁵⁷ D Scheepers, 'When I fought as a rebel', *Eastern Province Annual for 1936*, p69.

¹⁵⁸ McDonald and Kritzinger, *In die Skaduwee van die Dood*, p3.

¹⁵⁹ War Museum of the Boer Republics, Anon diary, 4299/4, from information in the diary.

heavy guns, sending Fouché and about 40 of his men racing over the Orange River.¹⁶⁰ Fouché raided the Aliwal North refugee camp, and captured four men, including the Magistrate's Clerk.¹⁶¹ Hendrik van Heerden, ex-Cape Police and a deserter from the Queenstown Rifle Volunteers, who had joined the commando on 6 July was fatally wounded. Du Plessis said they accepted his death fatalistically, saying they were sure that had Van Heerden been captured he would have been shot for desertion.¹⁶² Fouché boasted at the refugee camp that "we have nothing to complain about, ride khaki horses, use their guns and have a jolly life", but the clerk captured by them gave a different version. He insisted the commando had only a few scraps of food left and they actually raided the camp because they were starving.¹⁶³ The political struggle was long over, and the struggle for survival would become harder as the months passed.

Jan Theron

Jan Theron, of the Theron's Verkenner's Korps, formerly of Ceres, crossed the Orange River surreptitiously near Venterstad with a small party on 12 July 1901, and on 27 July looted a train at Fish River Station. He increased his men by seeking out stragglers from other commandos. Cmdt Fouché returned from the Free State early in September and found that 60 of his men were missing and had left with Theron. Theron also picked up 60 men cut off from Van Reenen, and another 60 from a small-time leader, Christoffel Botha, a scab inspector, who had been sniping at trains between Rosmead and Stormberg Junction.¹⁶⁴

Theron with vigorous Walter Henry de Vos of Hex River, who had been wounded at Spioenkop in Natal, drew Boer fighters to him like a magnet, was fresh on the scene and very aggressive. Smith and Lötter met him in the Waterkrans at the start of the drive to force Kritzinger over the Orange. Then Scobell, with the 9th Lancers and the CMR, scattered the combined Theron-Lötter-Botha-Smith Commando at Wolwevlei, near Fish River Station, on 8 August 1901 the night the railway lines were blown up at Conway and Roodehoogte.¹⁶⁵ Theron's men broke south, and at Bethesda Road snapped up 54 French's Scouts and then, rearmed and remounted, raced south. According to Maj Shute in Graaff-Reinet "reports of this regrettable incident got all over the place and French was very angry because Theron had got away".¹⁶⁶ Theron raced through the Southern Cape and down the Robinson Pass, throwing off his pursuers. He raided Heidelberg on 14 September.

¹⁶⁰ NAR, FK 807, Weekly Intelligence Report, 26 July 1901.

¹⁶¹ Du Plooy, *Aliwal Noord, Eenhondred Jaar*, I, p123. The security at the camp was improved and their money moved to safety.

¹⁶² Du Plessis, *Oomblikke van Spanning*, p67.

¹⁶³ *Grocott's Penny Mail*, 7 August 1901.

¹⁶⁴ NAR, FK 809, 27 July 1901. How many men crossed the Orange with Theron is not clear.

¹⁶⁵ *Graaff-Reinet Advertiser*, 'Trial of Cmdt JC Lötter', 30 September 1901.

¹⁶⁶ Shute's diary, 11/12 August 1901.

The commando crossed the railway line near Kleinstraat where he met Piet Hugo of Karbonaatjieskraal, who joined the commando on 23 September 1901, and led him down a footpath known as Kaaimansgat into the northwest.¹⁶⁷

On this journey Theron's commando had treated colonists of all races cruelly, raiding their homesteads and stripping them of stock and food. Tales of his outrages spread, causing the coloured people of Riversdale and Elim to flee into the mountains.¹⁶⁸ The shooting of two unarmed coloured scouts, Michiel Hoster and Jan Hartnick on 15 September 1901 near Swellendam, and the whipping of a white man Jan Nieuwenhuis, 64, and a boy, J Neethling only thirteen years old, about fifteen miles (24 kms) from Montagu, caused great indignation.

An Intelligence officer at Swellendam told his headquarters in Cape Town that Theron's announcement that whites and coloureds caught spying would be shot had sent fear throughout the district. He asked if nothing could be done in the way of reprisal. "This was murder pure and simple, and our intelligence will suffer if something is not done", he wrote.¹⁶⁹

Although Theron's Commando crossed the Cape Town-Bloemfontein railway line, having gained more men than when he entered the Cape Colony (including some men from Scheepers' Commando near Ockertskraal), his method of raising war had raised the stakes against the other commandos – Lötter and Scheepers - still in the field. Studies on insurgency tactics suggest that when insurgents increase the intensity of their warfare, reconciliation is less likely and war escalates. Government forces then combine to either drive the insurgents out or destroy them.¹⁷⁰ Lötter was captured in the beginning of September and Scheepers surrendered in October 1901, the influence Theron's raid had on the British military mind should not be underestimated, especially on the two commandants who appeared in court later.

The capture of Lötter's Commando

The pursuit of Lötter by Scobell and Lukin was organised from the Cradock district, home for the majority of the commando who knew it like the backs of their hands. It was also a death trap, because the columns used the railway lines from East London and Port Elizabeth to supply horses, fodder, men and transport. Scouts combed the surrounding districts for information on the

¹⁶⁷ NAR, FK 811, report of V/C Rossouw, 24 September 1901; Shute's diary, 8 August 1901; GF de V Hugo, et al, *Die Hugo Familieboek*, p254.

¹⁶⁸ Nat Lib, *Boer Army List*, September 1901, Theron was wanted for the murder of sixteen blacks by 16 September 1901.

¹⁶⁹ NAR, FK 812, Message from Intelligence Swellendam to Intelligence Cape Town, 18 September 1901; NAR, FK 823, Shooting of two scouts Jan Hartnick and Michiel Hoster, near Uitvlug, Swellendam, 15 September 1901; *The Cape Daily Telegraph*, 22 October 1901, 'More Brutality. Scheepers and Theron'.

¹⁷⁰ Scott, et al, *Insurgency*, p43.

whereabouts of the commando. Scobell was finally certain that Lötter's Commando was roaming about south of Cradock.

The morale of Lötter's men was very poor, as was his leadership. He did not have sufficient command of his men to force them to stand watch at night, or as Cmdt Wilhelm Fouché would have done, to force them to divide and scatter. From 20 August the pursuit became unremitting, and the commando slipped into the Agter-Sneeuberg, only to find the grass had been burnt in order to deny the horses fodder. They trekked along the Tandjiesberg, seeking an escape across the Camdeboo plains, only to find the Midland Mounted Rifles posted on the ridges of Aasvoëlberg. The two groups were in such close proximity that the Greef brothers called to the colonial troops "Give us a chance, give us a chance". But Lötter had treated the MMR troops roughly in June near Cradock, and they drove them back with rifle fire.

A small party were away from the main commando out hunting for food. Tienie van Heerden of Conway, Middelburg explained later, "we were holed up in a crevasse for days when another horse died in the terrible weather. We were forced to go to a loyalist, Gert Coetzee, who did not want to help Lötter men and was very reluctant to give us food. He warned us that we would get a thrashing if we joined Lötter at Petersburg. Later when we saw the commando's tracks going up the road we heeded his words and went another way".¹⁷¹

On Monday 2 September the commando moved southwest and got down the mountain, but when they reached the Vogel River the Cape Mounted Riflemen blocked their route. Riding in a tight bunch the commando doubled back, and Scobell's Column saw them take the road north to the hamlet of Petersburg. Scobell let them go and took a parallel path to the east and eventually arrived at Petersburg from a northerly direction.¹⁷² At nearby Nooitgedacht farm two labourers appeared and informed Lukin's scouts that the commando was sheltering on the tableland above in the Bouwershoek.

After resting for a few hours the column led their horses up a narrow path in the early hours of the morning in the bitter rain and waited. Eventually scouts returned to the column and reported that they had seen horses grazing near Paardefontein farm. Scobell had run his quarry to earth and he ordered a charge on the farmhouse in the distance. However Lötter and most of the commando were asleep on a nearby rise in a stone kraal partially covered with corrugated iron. When the rebels heard horses galloping they fired on the advance guard as they passed the kraal gate, and a few men were killed and wounded. The CMR and the Lancers then swarmed around the walls and attacked the commando in the kraal from all sides. After 45 minutes the rebels hoisted a white flag and surrendered.

¹⁷¹ Mrs K Steyn of Port Elizabeth gave this researcher two tapes recorded in 1971 in which three Rebels spoke of their experiences during the South African War. The tapes have been professionally redubbed, but the quality remains poor and only MJ van Heerden of Middelburg's voice is audible.

V/C Pieter Wolfaardt then picked up the rifle he had thrown down when he surrendered and fired at a Lancer riding towards him, killing him; he was overpowered by his own men. Lötter had failed to put a sentry at the only access to the farm and was now outgunned and defeated. His first words after surrendering were, "I thought that bugger Scobell would get me sooner or later".¹⁷³ As the commando stood huddled together it was obvious how hard the chase had been. They were filthy and in tatters, but mostly the soldiers stared at their feet. The weather was bitter, but many were barefoot while others at least had pieces of sheepskin tied around their feet. The Lancers, who all admired the Boer's ability to keep clean, said they had never seen men in such a dreadful state. Today it is regarded as a symptom of battle fatigue.

Of the 132 men present when the commando was captured on 5 September 1901, thirteen were killed, one died the following day, one groom escaped and 117 were taken prisoner. Of the 260 horses, over half had to be destroyed, mostly ridden to dereliction. There were piles of saddles and a surprising number of rifles and ammunition, even dynamite and a coil of fuse. The critical factor was that there was almost no food.

No insurgent can ride and fight to live another day if the civilian population is not prepared to feed him. Under Martial Law food for the farming population was strictly controlled and even the rebel families no longer had the resources to feed over 100 men at a time. Consequently Lötter learnt too late what countless other leaders have learnt in defeat, "No army survives if it does not eat at least once each day".¹⁷⁴

The fading fortune

Cmdt W Malan had earned a reputation as "the cleverest of all the commandants in the Cape Colony".¹⁷⁵ However he made a fatal decision when he decided to leave his commando under the leadership of the 19-year old Piet van der Merwe, a bold young man who knew no fear. Judge Henry Hugo, a firm character and a straight man who, had influence on Scheepers, accompanied Malan with a small party to the Orange Free State.¹⁷⁶

Van der Merwe, Scheepers and 300 men, of whom the majority were rebels, trekked into the Southern Cape. They threw caution to the wind and ignored Kritzinger's orders not to burn private dwellings in the Cape Colony.¹⁷⁷ Scheepers ordered his men to burn down two farms in Aberdeen

¹⁷² National Army Museum, London, Ernest Bell papers, Letter from Mortimer with 9th Lancers.

¹⁷³ Shearing, *Commandant Johannes Lötter and his Rebels*, pp31-31.

¹⁷⁴ Shearing, *Commandant Johannes Lötter and his Rebels*, pp26-32.

¹⁷⁵ British Intelligence, Cape Town, *Boer Army List*, p16.

¹⁷⁶ British Intelligence, Cape Town, *Boer Army List*, p17.

¹⁷⁷ FAR, AC van Heerden papers, R155/194, 23 July 1901. Kritzinger wrote to Scheepers forbidding him to burn down private dwellings as it was causing enmity between them and the English inclined Afrikaners.

district and two more in the Steytlerville district, because the owners served in the colonial forces.¹⁷⁸ The actual control of the commando then moved to Van der Merwe, as Scheepers became a shadow of his former self. During the next two months until he surrendered, Scheepers, silent and withdrawn, was driven round in a cart and was seldom seen riding a horse.¹⁷⁹ By early September he was conveyed in a cart and was seen curled up with a blanket over his head.¹⁸⁰ He also spent time in bed at Ockertskraal, Ladismith and at Schoemanshoek, Oudtshoorn.¹⁸¹

After a skirmish near Uniondale on 19 August where they lost three killed, eleven wounded and fourteen captured, the Hussars in pursuit of Scheepers and Van Der Merwe changed their tactics. Scheepers rode off with a bodyguard and only met up with the main commando again at Knuy, near Ladismith, eight days later. The Hussars caught up with the commando at the top of Langkloof near George on 24 August 1901. When the first shells exploded among the party of prisoners that were walking in front of the horses, they fled in all directions. 'A' and 'C' Squadrons had split up and began flanking attacks, engaging the commando from different directions. The Lancers that suddenly appeared from the direction of Herhold charged the Boers with their swords, killing a young Olwagen. The commando fled in disorder and their prisoners were all freed.¹⁸²

The main commando met up with Scheepers on 29 August and trekked into the Kannaland, only to be ambushed in the bush near Buffelsfontein (Van Wyksdorp). Here the pursuit became so unremitting that Hermanus van der Westhuizen of Prince Albert said he rode for three days with a bullet in his leg before Dr Ben Smith was able to remove it.¹⁸³ The farmers were poorer and food was short. Some farms they visited were only ransacked, but others were burnt down. They raced into the undefended Barrydale, and looted the shops. Johannes Smith of Aberdeen complained now that they seldom saw a friendly face. Piet van der Merwe, fighting off the pursuing columns, also coped with the ailing Scheepers. On one of his better days, on Smith's fifteenth birthday, the rebels tossed the Commandant up in a blanket, which is another reason to doubt the legend that he was suffering from appendicitis.¹⁸⁴

When Piet van der Merwe was killed and 37 rebels were captured at Driefontein near Laingsburg, Scheepers was on his own. Hans Pieterse, a shepherd, from the Ladismith district, who was kidnapped by Paul Kriel, a Uniondale rebel, told his grandson how the commando carried their

¹⁷⁸ CAR, AG 3646, The Trial of Cmdt GJ Scheepers. He pleaded guilty to Charges 24, 25, 26 and 27 relating to the burning of these four farms; Norah Stucky, nee Featherstone, an eyewitness to the burning of Featherstonehaugh, told her story on tape, private archives of Marjory Stucky, Graaff-Reinet.

¹⁷⁹ Pers com, Stephanus Vosloo of Louterwater, Joubertina, who said his granny nursed Scheepers in early August.

¹⁸⁰ KBA, Cd 981, Scheepers was acquitted of the death of scouts Jacpan and Rooy because witnesses said he lay in a cart covered by blankets and had nothing to do with the executions.

¹⁸¹ FP Fletcher-Vane, *Pax Britannica in South Africa*, p191.

¹⁸² Smith, *Ek Rebbeleer*, pp53-5; *George and Knysna Herald*, 2 October, 1901.

¹⁸³ Pers com, Hermanus van der Westhuizen told his Father's stories to the writer in the early 1970s.

¹⁸⁴ Smith, *Ek Rebbeleer*, p46.

sick commandant on a homemade stretcher, which they slung between the horses.¹⁸⁵ His condition improved somewhat and Scheepers was seen riding in a cart as they raced through Vergelegen, Cango and Spitshoek with various troops of horsemen behind them.¹⁸⁶

No youngster wanted to join his commando now, or if they did soon ran away. A party of Theron's men appeared and 'recruited' some of Scheepers' men, who slipped away with them. The old guard stayed loyal, the two Pypers brothers, Lieut L Luyt, Alex and Carel van Heerden, Le Boef du Plessis and his adjutant Karel Lempkuhl never wavered. But Carel van Heerden and a newcomer, Stephen Guest of Leeuwblad, Oudtshoorn quarrelled constantly, and Van Heerden threatened to shoot Guest; Scheepers managed to settle things.

The pursuit intensified and Crabbe nearly captured the commando at Welgevonden, as they struggled towards Gamkaspoot. On 1 October Capt F Wormald of the 12th Lancers pushed them towards Riversdale, where the commando was attacked from all sides at Adamskraal. They then took the road to Plathuis and were forced up the Prins River. But there was no escape as the Lancers fired down from the hills, and Scheepers was forced to leave his cart and flee on horseback. Schalk Pypers then took over command, and after fighting the Hussars all day, they reached the Anysberg where Gideon Krause, carrying a flag of truce, rode over to the Oudtshoorn DMT and asked for a doctor to examine Scheepers. The doctor appeared, and according to Guest, told Scheepers to drive in the cart rather than on horseback.¹⁸⁷

The commando, now split into small groups, captured the post cart on the Laingsburg road for Scheepers to rest in, and they reached the Doek Mountains with the troops just behind them. He took shelter in Barend Koorts' cottage on Kopjeskraal on the Dwyka River on 9 October 1901. The following day Scheepers insisted on staying behind, saying he was in too much pain to continue. He appointed Lieut Schalk Pypers Acting Commandant, and Carel van Heerden Veld Cornet.¹⁸⁸ Then he asked a farmer to fetch a doctor from Prince Albert.¹⁸⁹ After singing a hymn and saying a touching farewell, the remnant of the commando rode away, thirteen more men having vanished during the night.¹⁹⁰

The next day Capt E Shearman, with a troop of the 10th Hussars, scattered the commando, now less than 100 men, who had spent the day at nearby Wolwefontein. Shearman found Scheepers in bed in a cottage at Kopjeskraal on 11 October all alone. He then surrendered.¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁵ Pers com, Jan Pieterse (grandson of Hans Pieterse) of Ockertskraal, Ladismith, 1 May, 1999.

¹⁸⁶ *Oudtshoorn Courant*, 17 & 27 October 1901.

¹⁸⁷ Pers com, Stephen Guest of Citrusdal.

¹⁸⁸ Rev FS Vivier, *Kommandant Carel Petrus van Heerden*. Scheepers appointed Van Heerden Sergeant on 11 July 1901 and *Veld Cornet* on 10 October 1901.

¹⁸⁹ Preller, *Scheepers se Dagboek*, pp74-75.

¹⁹⁰ Strydom, PL, *Oorlogboekie*, Calvinia Museum.

¹⁹¹ Luttig, *Mediese Loopbaan van Dr P Luttig*, Fransie Pienaar Museum, 9 October 1901; Extract from Digest of Service of the 10th Hussars states that after driving off the Boers and scattering them, Shearman found Scheepers concealed on the farm Kopjes Kraal on 11 October 1901 and captured him.

A marked feature of battle fatigue or trauma is that the person affected ignores danger. Surrendering to the British was very risky, as French had warned the commandants that they could face trial if they persisted in shooting unarmed scouts. Scheepers ignored these warnings and had become quite isolated in a far-flung corner of the Cape Colony, thinking he could go it alone.¹⁹² He was moved to various little hospital wards and kept under close guard. Colonels and officers of rank paid him courtesy calls. Had the lion really become a lamb? Would he be fit to appear in court? Scheepers resting in bed, having his photograph taken with a nurse, was oblivious to the arguments raging about him.

After all he wasn't a run of the mill Boer. He was a charismatic young leader who had landed up in a British colony and treated it like his home stamping ground. There was also a file filled with sworn statements from those who had suffered under his hand or seen others die in casual executions. They wanted redress.¹⁹³

One of the persistent stories about Scheepers that survives to this day is that he was really a colonial rebel and not a Transvaler. What was the basis of this story? The story started when the identity of Gideon Jacobus Scheepers became confused with that of Daniel du Plessis Scheepers of Upsal when the commandant burnt down Stockdale in the Somerset East district. The story spread that the rebel Daniel Scheepers, whose father owned Upsal, had burnt down his neighbour's house on Stockdale. The Magistrate of Cradock, Lancelot Harrison had also put a price on Daniel Scheepers' head for the murder of a black, Jantjies, at Dwingfontein. By the time Gideon Scheepers surrendered the identities of the two men were so interwoven that a soldier fired shots outside the cottage after Gideon Scheepers surrendered and shouted, "I've got £200!"¹⁹⁴

The demise of the East Cape commandos

As the commandos in the Midlands were crushed or scattered, the pursuit of the remaining hard-pressed bands of Boers intensified. In the Eastern Cape the local troops knew only too well what fleeting targets the guerillas made as they raced away on horseback. Army orders went out to reduce Boer mobility, so local patrols drove stray horses into the villages, shot the derelicts and shifted the protection camps even further south - safe from raiding parties.

In East Griqualand, Lieut-Col Walter Stanford organised the blacks into reserve forces, expecting the Boers to raid black districts to get fresh horses. When scouts reported that Myburgh was threatening to invade tribal land, 500 blacks were organised into a corps that held the Lehana Pass

¹⁹² PiX Internet Explorer, Dr Silvia Bercu, Forensic Psychiatrist, Ealing Hospital, London, 'Psychological Consequences of War', April 1999; Commonwealth of Australia, Health Care, Combat and non-combat caused trauma: general perspectives and related themes, <http://www.dva.gov.au>; McManners, *The Scars of War*, p78.

¹⁹³ Taffy and David Shearing, *Commandant Gideon Scheepers and the Search for his Grave*, pp146-147.

¹⁹⁴ Luttig, 'Die Mediese Loopbaan van Dr P Luttig', p24, diary for 1901.

between Barkly East and East Griqualand at the end of August.¹⁹⁵ Kidwell, a special Justice of the Peace from Jamestown, reported that Hendrik Bester of Klerksdorp, ex-Cape Police, had attacked Jamestown on 30 August with twenty men, but after a fight lasting four hours was forced to withdraw. The Magistrate of Aliwal North also reported that the position of the farmers was pitiful as the district was in the possession of the enemy and few farmers dared come to town.¹⁹⁶

By September Bester's commando had risen to about 58 youngsters from fourteen to seventeen years of age. "We are at the mercy of this brigand, and have received no foodstuffs for over three months. This gang of robbers has smashed up nine farms and thrashed blacks. People are terrified of them", said Kidwell at Jamestown.¹⁹⁷ It transpired however that Bester was not only on bad terms with the colonial forces, but also with Myburgh and Fouché, and his commando dwindled under the pursuit by the columns. By November Gorrings's Column was posted to Kingscrown in Aliwal North to round up stragglers, and here they captured Bester, who was wearing khaki uniform, with six men on 21 November 1901. He was executed a week later.¹⁹⁸

In September Myburgh had issued a proclamation threatening to shoot any black who had taken up arms against the Boers by 15 September.¹⁹⁹ When this was ignored, Myburgh tried to surprise Barkly East, but his commando was driven off when the garrison was alerted that they were approaching. Forced to turn west, Myburgh was shelled by Monro at Roodenek, broke back to Karmmelkspruit and entered New England. They rode to Lauriston below Mount Newton, and surprised 27 men of the New England Mounted Rifles who had made camp near the police post and neglected to put out guards. The rebels fired into the tents, killing one, wounding four and taking the rest prisoner. They captured 100 horses, saddles, blankets, food, rifles and ammunition, enough to rearm the whole commando. Instead of re-equipping themselves and taking what booty they could carry, the rebels torched the tents and blankets. Some of his men, horrified at this action, raced to fetch Myburgh, but the situation was out of control and he could not stop them. The fires and smoke was visible from a distance and a force under Maj Wooler raced out from Barkly East with two maxims, a fifteen-pdr and a pom-pom, loaned from Col Monro, and caught Myburgh's celebrating commando quite unprepared. The commando fled, but Willem Botha of Bokspruit was found dead, and Jacobus Kruger of Swemspoort was captured.²⁰⁰ After this debacle the commando broke up, and Myburgh joined Fouché as an ordinary burgher. Small leaderless groups wandered around; some surrendered and others hid out in the ravines.

¹⁹⁵ CAR, D/D 1/81 6316, report of WE Stanford, Commanding Forces East Griqualand; MacQuarrie, *Reminiscences of Sir Walter Stanford*, pp200-27.

¹⁹⁶ NAR, FK 807, Report of Magistrate R Tilliard, August 1901.

¹⁹⁷ NAR, FK 823, Report of A Kidwell, Special JP in Jamestown.

¹⁹⁸ *Somerset Budget*, 18 November 1901; *Grocott's Penny Mail*, 20 November 1901.

¹⁹⁹ CAR, D/D 7/12, Folio 2515, 10 September 1901; NAR, FK 812, Myburgh's proclamation.

²⁰⁰ NAR, FK 815; *Frontier Guardian*, 26 September, 1901; *South African Field Force Casualty List*, Section July to December, 1901, New England Mounted Rifles, p87.

Insurgents fighting a lost cause can be held together under a charismatic leader who keeps the group ideals alive. But without a strong chain of command, rebels, like those in Myburgh's Commando, fighting outside the law, can easily become looters who just live for the day and end up sabotaging their own cause.

The guerilla fighter

The only guerrilla fighter worth his salt was Cmdt Wilhelm Fouché who returned in early September from the Free State to find that Theron had gone off with most of his men, and was seen near Kraalberg, trekking east with 100 men.²⁰¹ He kept on the move as he was constantly in touch with small bodies of troops. After a skirmish in which Sergt B Taylor of the BMI was killed near Aliwal North on 13 September 1901, Fouché and his men outdistanced their pursuers and made camp at Roodenek near Jamestown. In the face of unremitting pursuit he divided his force, leaving half of them in the charge of the Free Stater, Gerrit Odendaal.²⁰² Fouché raced for Barkly East via the Kraai River and remained one jump ahead of his pursuers; he then appeared in the Transkei, captured the post horses and looted the stores in the Elliot district, after which he tried to break into tribal territory through the western side of the Drakensberg, but was driven back.²⁰³

As the pursuit of the Boers intensified, Daniel Scheepers of Somerset East reappeared on the scene in about October 1901. He had barely recovered from fracturing his femur in August at Ruiterskraal, and re-entered the fray on horseback, carrying a crutch and rifle. He complained that it was awkward riding that way, but said he was so tired of a quiet life that he risked everything for a change.²⁰⁴ During October he discovered two laagers in the hills near each other in the Stormberg region, and realized that Boer and Brit had unwittingly camped half a mile (three quarter km) apart. He slipped down to warn the sleeping Boers and found Gerrit Odendaal and Piet Wessels (former guide to Gen Smuts) and their commandos asleep. It was almost too late as moments later the colonial forces attacked, although the Boers scattered in time they lost many horses.²⁰⁵ Not putting out pickets at night was a risky practise, but increasingly the fighters were fatalistic, often because they were too worn out to stand guard at night after a long day in the saddle.

Small parties wandering about were tracked down. In November a party under Petrus Swanepoel of Rouxville that had split from Myburgh, was ambushed at Holyrood near Motkop in the Lady Grey district. They fought it out in a graveyard, taking shelter behind the old tombstones.

²⁰¹ NAR, FK 2111, Intelligence report of 28 August 1901.

²⁰² NAR, FK 815, Intelligence report of 6 September 1901.

²⁰³ MacQuarrie, *Reminiscences of Sir Walter Stanford*, p226; *Frontier Guardian*, 1 November 1901.

²⁰⁴ *Somerset Budget*, 'Commandant D du P Scheepers' Memoirs', 1962.

²⁰⁵ *Somerset Budget*, 'Commandant D du P Scheepers' Memoirs', 1962.

Johannes Antonie Coetzee, fifteen years old, of Barkly East, was killed and seven Free Staters were captured.²⁰⁶

On 14 November 1901 Col Scobell, the CMR, 9th Lancers and other colonial forces, slipped back into the Eastern Cape. Moving in two sections they scoured the Aliwal North district for wounded Boers. This news appeared to increase Fouché's aggressiveness. He killed two Connaught Rangers near Rietvlei, and sent a note to the military saying he had shot them.²⁰⁷ At the same time Odendaal and his rebels surprised Gorrings's Column near Floukraal, killing an Australian and a trooper from the 17th Lancers. It had become a vicious war; a farmer reported that the wounded Sergt A Spurling was propped against a wall when Odendaal walked over and shot him at point blank range with a Mauser pistol. Odendaal was from then on a marked man.²⁰⁸

The South African War was costing more than anybody imagined, and Kitchener wanted the Cape cabinet to foot a larger share of the bill. After intensive negotiations in which Martial Law was extended to the Ports, Sprigg and his cabinet proposed that the Colony, south of the Orange River, be divided into two areas that would be controlled by superior colonial officers who would perform policing duties. These officers would command the Cape Mounted Riflemen, Cape Police and all Volunteer regiments handed over to the Colonial Government. Once the Cape colony took over command the Colonial Treasury would pay £170,000 monthly for their upkeep. The upshot was that the Colonial Defence Force became the Cape Colonial Forces and Col Lukin took control of the Eastern Province and Col CP Crewe the Western Province. The new arrangements were successful; the tactic of making 'driving kraals' and the erection of small forts over trails used by the Boer forces, broke up the commandos and stopped them breaking south.²⁰⁹

The pursuit against Fouché's Commando intensified, and Du Plessis said they were all forced out of the Molteno district. They trekked in two parties to Morgenstêr between Dordrecht and Barkly East where they were nearly trapped against the border of the Transkei, and did not dare dismount for 53 hours. Odendaal raced back with his rebels to the Jamestown area. Col Price, leading the Kaffrarians, chased them backwards and forwards, driving them into the 9th Lancers. Then in December Scobell, who had been ill for some time, gave up his command and returned to England. In opting out of a duel with *De Ou Groote*, Scobell paid the greatest compliment to Cmdt Fouché.

²⁰⁶ FAR, SO/POW. RT Wheeler (POW 28641) went to India on 13 February 1902; Oosthuizen, *Rebelle van die Stormberg*, p203.

²⁰⁷ *George and Knysna Herald*, 12 December 1901; *South African Field Force Casualty List*, Section 5, Connaught Rangers, p74, 16 November 1901.

²⁰⁸ *Graaff-Reinet Advertiser*, 13 February 1902. The report that Odendaal had been killed near Pearston included the account of how he had killed the wounded Spurling; *South African Field Force Casualty List*, Section January to June 1902, Gorrings's Column, p87; Tasmanian Contingent p81; 17th Lancers, p8.

²⁰⁹ CAR, PMO, minute 1/257, Sprigg to Governor, 29 August 190; HM Wright (ed), *Sir James Rose Innes Selected Correspondence (1884-1902)*, Van Riebeeck Society, II-3, p309; *Somerset Budget*, 'Commandant D du P Scheepers' Memoirs', 7 June 1962; Marthinus van Baart and Leopold Scholtz, (eds), *Vir Vryheid and vir Reg*,

According to the CMR records Scobell's forces captured 50 Boers and 350 horses during December 1901.²¹⁰

Fouché split his force up over Christmas, and told them to get some rest. In the New Year he was around Jamestown, collecting up his men. Col Monro and the Lovat Scouts, who engaged him near Kingscrown, described the commando as demoralized and hiding along the Kraai River. The rebels were hanging on by a thread only. On 5 February 1902 Cmdt Fouché was wounded in the hip while being pursued by Monro's forces. He was moved to a krantz on the farm Koppiesfontein in the Bonthoeke, and nursed by the Marais family for three weeks. When he had recovered his officers urged him to leave the Stormberg and he agreed. Fouché's Commando broke west into the Midlands in four groups; Myburgh and some of his men went with Fouché. Gerrit Odendaal and Daan Scheepers led the others, and Cmdt Piet Wessels and V/C Jan Bezuidenhout acted as rearguard. Fouché had to leave the dismounted behind, and told those without horses to stay hidden until he could return with fresh horses and enough weapons for them all.²¹¹

A splinter group under William Hendrik Watson tried to operate independently, and, desperate for arms, raided Little Pot River and captured members of the East Griqualand Mounted Volunteers and two black scouts. Lieut-Col WF Raw gave pursuit, and the Boers retired up the Drakensberg. The rebels let their prisoners go at Foxley Pass, but as they rode off somebody turned and fired at a black scout, killing him from a distance. Watson, who denied he was implicated in the incident, voluntarily surrendered to Col Armstrong on 13 February 1902. Sixteen others surrendered that month. When P de Wet laid down arms at Rhodes in March 1902, rebellion in the Barkly East and Maclear districts was virtually at an end, although small pockets of rebels held out in the kloofs of the Drakensberg.²¹²

Boy du Plessis said that the rebels from the Eastern Cape returning to the Midlands split away from the main group at Luisfontein in the Maraisburg district. They were fortunate because on 10 March 1902, while camped at Vredenburg near Pearston, the Frontier Light Horse attacked the sleeping Boers and killed Odendaal, Capt J van der Walt and JP Naude of Lady Grey.²¹³ V/C Jan Bezuidenhout, pursued by the CMR, doubled back at Elandsrivierpoort and took refuge in the Bamboes Mountains until the end of the war.²¹⁴

The Kaffrarian Rifles closely pursued the remnant of the rebel forces under Fouché and Daan Scheepers until they crossed the Kariëga River in the Aberdeen district in the teeth of a flood.

Anglo-Boereoorlog Gedenkboek, pp93,95 & 97, see articles about small forts in Citrusdal, Clanwilliam and Herbertsdale which are typical of structures erected in 1902; see Chapter 5.

²¹⁰ Williams, *Record of the Cape Mounted Riflemen*, p111. Translation 'The Big One'.

²¹¹ NAR, FK 840, Weekly Intelligence Report, 2 March 1902.

²¹² CAR, D/D 1/81, 6316, Report of WE Stanford, 4 April 1902.

²¹³ Du Plessis, *Oomblikke van Spanning*, pp123-129; *Graaff Reinet Advertiser*, 12 March, 1902; *SA War Honours and Awards*, p107.

²¹⁴ NAR, FK 843, Weekly Intelligence, 29 March 1902.

This gave them some respite from the unremitting pursuit as they took refuge in the Camdeboo Mountains and united with the remnant of Malan's Commando. Led by Malan and Fouché, who were outstanding and charismatic leaders, these men defied all attempts to capture them. It was fitting that Fouché, the greatest guerilla fighter in the Cape Colony, was the one to lead his surviving rebels into Cradock to lay down arms in June 1902.²¹⁵

Rebellion in the northwest

Looking at the Cape Colony as a whole it was obvious that the eastern districts - smaller, pro-British and with a railway network - wouldn't favour the Boers in the long run, even though they were in closer proximity to the Free State. As a result of French's tactics to drive them in a westerly direction, the smaller commandos left the Midlands and began operating in the northwest Cape. The result was that Johannes Smith, Van Reenen, Lategan, Jan Theron and their men appeared in the Fraserburg, Calvinia, Carnarvon, Loeriesfontein and Kenhardt districts towards the end of 1901. And the more open, sparsely populated region became the focus of military activity. The advantage for the Boer forces was that districts beyond the Cape Town/De Aar railway line were pro-Boer, and local farmers were out on commando. But in an area of low strategic value the Boers trekking up and down were more of a nuisance than a fighting force.

By the end of 1901 most of Fraserburg's, Sutherland's and Kenhardt's young men were on commando west of the Cape Town/De Aar line, but they were not a fighting force as such. One of the strongest was Petrus de Wet of Klipkolk, Fraserburg who had joined Hertzog earlier and returned to the CC in May 1901. He trekked around the Bokkeveld and trained recruits on the Great Riet River. Albert Smith, a farmer and hawker, controlled 50 men at Rhenostervlei near Sutherland. Petrus Jacobus Fourie, leader in the inhospitable Tanqua Valley laager, was at Blaauwheuveld, twenty miles (32 kms) north of Sutherland. These self-styled commandants operated independently, or at best reluctantly together, and attacked convoys and persecuted the coloured population. Marais, alias Lourens Erasmus, roamed round with about 100 youngsters between Prince Albert Road and Sutherland, hunting for small patrols and coloured people. Abraham Louw was on the trek with 200 men between Sutherland and Calvinia, as he had been since he returned from the Orange Free State in May.²¹⁶

These commandos fell under Manie Maritz who trekked over to Louw's Commando in the Roggeveld in July and tried to reorganise them. But old Abraham Louw wasn't a fighting man, and it was a pretty hopeless task to get him to attack because he always claimed to be out of ammunition.

²¹⁵ Smith, *Ek Rebelleer*, p175.

Maritz was a daring leader who tried to wage a war with a few horses and rifles against guns. When Theron's Commando reinforced him he launched his first raid on the Swartland, but was hampered by a shortage of arms and horses. He spoke well of the rebels, said they had great endurance, could shoot and knew how to look after a horse. This was especially so once they learnt how to accept discipline.²¹⁷ In October 1901 he headed south through the Clanwilliam district, and surprised the Velddrift Town Guard at the crossing of the Berg River.²¹⁸ He divided his force, and while one section raced into Vredenburg, Theron's men entered Hopefield and Porterville and destroyed the telegraph. They united at Piquetberg on 13 October, but they had captured only 27 rifles and little ammunition. Then he made a fine haul when they cleared 400 horses from the remount camp in Malmesbury, which he drove back to the northwest Cape.²¹⁹ The Swartland was in a state of shock. The villages began to build blockhouses and put up barbed wire fences.

The following month Maritz led another incursion into the Western Cape reaching Darling, but now he had lost the element of surprise. A group under V/C C Hildebrand had taken food and clothing from the Darling shops when Johannes Smith of Aberdeen suddenly realised that the Boers were fleeing along the Malmesbury road towards Klipkop with a large force of horsemen galloping behind them. Another column could be seen coming from Ysterfontein, and a terrific bombardment was heard from behind the village. Maj-Gen TE Stephenson had his columns organized and waiting. He then drove the commandos north over a wide front. Maritz arrived with reinforcements, but they were too few and too late, and the commando fell back towards Moorreesburg, leaving behind Hildebrand's body.²²⁰ His memorial at Darling today is a mute reminder of the promise of the first Invasion that the Boers would go to Cape Town.

At Carnarvon on 15 September 1901 a meeting was held at which it was decided to start a District Mounted Troop. A resolution signed by AG Visser (the Poet) and 78 people stated that, "no matter what the feeling of the inhabitants of the district may have been for the people of the Transvaal and Orange River Colony, they strongly condemn the invasion of the Colony owing to the ruination they have brought about by their acts. The invaders have proved that they are our enemies and we protest their conduct".²²¹ The people present started a District Mounted Troops, of which 75% were Dutch, and offered to raise men at Brandvlei, Vosburg and Loxton.²²² Constable CH Halkett was

²¹⁶ Piles of stones said to mark the graves of coloured Scouts who were captured and shot by Boers during the South African War have been pointed out to this researcher in the Fraserburg, Merweville and Sutherland districts. Rebels fighting under Capt Smith and Cmdt Japie Neser were particularly associated with these killings.

²¹⁷ Maritz, *My Lewe en Strewe*, p43.

²¹⁸ *South African Field Force Casualty List*, Section July to December 1901, Town Guards, p108.

²¹⁹ Maritz, *My Lewe en Strewe*, p43; Lambertus Myburgh Fourie, *Die Militere Loopbaan van Manie Maritz tot aan die einde van die Anglo-Boereoorlog*, p25.

²²⁰ Smith, *Ek Rebelleer*, pp90-91.

²²¹ CAR, PMO 83, No 27, Letter from Carel van Zyl, Mayor of Carnarvon, to Sprigg, 15 September 1901.

²²² CAR, D/D 1/68 Folio 12736, Statement by Magistrate, 15 September 1901.

appointed lieutenant of the Carnarvon DMT, comprising 40 men, on 13 September 1901.²²³ By November the situation among the farmers was growing increasingly desperate. Gideon De Villiers of Fraserburg described the last months of 1901 as "the time when dust meant troubles. A cloud of dust meant a column of mounted men. You were so helpless on your farm. If it was a commando and you didn't report them, you would soon be arrested by a pursuing column. If the Boers caught you making reports, you would get the sjambok".²²⁴

Maritz retreated to the northern Cape with his men and more horses, where he heard the astonishing news that Gen Jan Smuts with a commando of Transvalers had reached Van Rhynsdorp on 23 November 1901. He intended operating from the northwest Cape. Smuts, who, as the senior officer, took command of the Boer forces soon discovered that most of the time small parties of Boers sniped at convoys or just wandered around. Others were farming, busy reaping wheat and moving it to safety. They were all in need of reorganisation. Smuts organised his 3,000 strong force, sending Lieut J Golding to co-ordinate the Fraserburg/Sutherland rebels, and they inflicted more losses than they received. But it was really a stalemate and simply all too late to raise many recruits as the horses had been cleared from the veld. Although Smuts ended the campaign besieging O'Okiep, many rebels who joined near the end of the war remained unarmed.²²⁵

During the final months of the war Combat General Malan scored some notable successes, particularly over Lieut-Col Crabbe when he captured his convoy at Uitspansfontein in the Beaufort West district early in February 1902. Maj Crofton, who was OC of the convoy of 50 donkey wagons, escorted by 100 West Yorks Militia, had laagered at Uitspansfontein and sent an appeal for help to Crabbe, who had been held up ahead by Boers in Fraserburg, saying he was in a bad state. That night Malan's and Hugo's Commandos captured the sangars guarding the convoy and Crofton was killed. In the morning Crabbe tried to retrieve his convoy. Rees, whose letter survived, said "of course the Boers smashed them; every officer in the fight or in the other columns said they were all galloping for all they were worth with about 1,000 Boers after them. The morale effect is tremendous, for the Boers to say we took a convoy in the teeth of three columns and routed one column, is great".²²⁶ Rees was right - it was a great morale booster, and has gone down in local folklore as the "Clipping of the Crab's claws".

In the Sutherland district the Geldenhuys or Geldenhuis family of the Tanqua Karoo went into rebellion "because the English were going to take the country". The small commando of about eighteen men fought the Bushmanland Borderers tooth and nail in the inhospitable stone *koppies* near Karee River and Bowenwadrift. After MJ Geldenhuys was implicated in the shooting of a number of scouts on 2 February 1902, the pursuit of the clan became unremitting. The commando only just

²²³ CAR, D/D 6/104 Colonial Defence Force Orders No 46, 8 November 1901.

²²⁴ Pers com, Gideon de Villiers, of Gansfontein. Interviewed at Ons Rust, Fraserburg, 10 August 1980.

²²⁵ Shearing, *General Jan Smuts and his Long Ride*, pp 155-156.

escaped capture at Diepkloof when Piet Geldenhuys realised they had camped in a dangerous position; he woke the other men and they changed camp just in time to avoid being captured.²²⁷ A month later Piet was killed. Once the laager was captured on 22 March 1902 the remainder of the clan vacated the Tanqua. About eight of them laid down arms either at Hopetown to McCrachen or at Clanwilliam; four were captured including Barnard Lambertus, who was severely wounded in the leg and two members of the family, including Daniel Geldenhuys, were killed.²²⁸

But guerillas cannot survive on battles alone, and three retired farmers who lived at *Onse Rust* in Fraserburg remembered that by 1902 the rebels were nearly starving. A commando would charge a farm and then race through the house sweeping away every scrap of food; and the farmers would have to beg for their pots back.²²⁹ Mrs Susannah van Heerden of Murraysburg, agreed and said Malan's men were so hungry they would hang around the farms and take the pots from the stove at midday, give the family some and eat the rest. She said in later years when she heard fancy stories about jolly times on commando she was sure that people did not want to remember how it all really ended.²³⁰

²²⁶ Carver, *The Boer War*, pp245-246.

²²⁷ Nel, *Die Kaapse Rebelle van die Hantam-Karoo*, pp348-349; CAR, AG 2116, Sentenced under Proclamation 100 of 1902 at Clanwilliam and Hopetown; AG 2062, Miscellaneous information, High Treason Case 1899-1904.

²²⁸ CAR, AG 2062, Miscellaneous information, High Treason Case 1899-1904.

²²⁹ Pers com, Gideon de Villiers, Fraserburg, June 1980.

²³⁰ Pers com, Mrs Susannah van Heerden of Murraysburg, interviewed in August 1978.

CHAPTER 4

THE MILITARY TAKE OVER THE COURTS

The return of Martial Law

Chance upsets the best-laid plans, and there are unintentional consequences in war quite as dramatic as the causes that led to the war in the first place. During the earlier period of the South African War the sentence of the Class 2 Cape rebel was a mild five-year disfranchisement, whether the rebel was on the Voter's roll or not, according to the Indemnity and Special Tribunals Act of October 1900. However only six months later, after the return of Martial Law, Military Tribunals sentenced convicted rebels to be executed or commuted it to penal servitude for life. Why had the attitude of the authorities altered so drastically towards a Cape rebel?

The Indemnity and Special Tribunals Act promulgated by the Colonial Parliament in October 1900 was to be enforced for six months. What proved to be a shortsighted measure reflected the impression towards the end of 1900 that the war was practically over, and emphasized that ill feelings between colonists were to be avoided. It overlooked the fact that the war was still raging in the Boer Republics, and its mild provisions were little deterrent if rebellion reoccurred. Many Martial Law restrictions in vogue in the northeastern districts were eased at the end of 1900. Rebel stock was no longer attached and newspapers circulated freely. Martial Law was lifted in the Molteno district in August, and in October 1900 at Steynsburg; while still in force in De Aar itself, the remainder of the Britstown district had returned to civil administration.¹

The second invasion came as a bombshell. The ambitious President Steyn had caught the Cape Parliamentary liberals on the back foot for the second time. He was resolved not to sit down at any negotiation table that did not guarantee Free State independence. As the President's military power waned, he fanned the dream of Boer victory by ordering fast-moving Free State commandos into the Cape Colony to extend the war and to recruit rebels. Initially the British did not see the invading commandos as a serious military threat. Milner commented to Chamberlain that "the marches had no strategic importance and could not affect the ultimate issue of the war, but would keep a good many of our men

¹ Amery (eds), *The Times History*, V11, pp554-55.

employed, tire out the horses, inflict injury on the country and damage its prestige.”² The second invasion of the Cape Colony was irregular warfare or insurgency, minus politics as the rebels recruited by the Free Staters had little political influence; few were landowners and most them were youngsters and younger sons. This certainly influenced the manner in which they were treated once the Indemnity and Special Tribunals Act no longer protected them. Sprigg made it clear to Milner in January 1901 that the Tribunals assigned very mild sentences for those convicted of High Treason. When the Act lapsed in April 1901 however, rebels captured under arms would be sentenced severely, and they could even be sentenced to death.³

Rebellion is a changing phenomenon, and, only too well aware of the damage done by the dilatory response of WP Schreiner’s Government to the first invasion, Kitchener acted swiftly. The first response to the invasion was hind pursuit by mounted regiments. At the same time Martial Law was extended and the movement of the civilian population was controlled to prevent a general uprising. The regulations were extensive, all pervasive, and placed restrictions on the lives of civilians. The storing of arms and ammunition and the large-scale commandeering of horses had a major effect on civilian life, but not on the rebels who picked up loose horses. For the law-abiding travel of any kind became strictly controlled and required a permit, while the rebels rode where they pleased. Farmers also required permits to keep forage, corn, maize, rye and oats, while the commandos appeared unannounced at farms and proceeded to unpack the haylofts of fodder for their horses.⁴

The law-abiding were inflexibly controlled under the new procedures, while the new rebel did as he pleased beyond the reach of the law. Because the rebel rose out of the civilian population, the screws would be tightened on their families and they would suffer for their sons’ rebellion by being jailed or deported to other towns until the source from which the rebel rose was made powerless. Although they remained undoubtedly angry and resentful, they would no longer be able to fuel rebellion through their children.

Whether it was due to the unexpected speed with which Martial Law was implemented throughout the Colony, or because most of the fighting men were loyalists who joined the colonial forces (their eventual total was 33,000), the rebel numbers in the second invasion were about 15% of those that rebelled in the first invasion. The rebel enrollment of white males was highest close to the Boer Republics and dwindled in proportion to the distance from its borders. Statistics based on the 1904 census and collated by this researcher on a database, indicate that while 29.9% of white males rebelled in Griqualand

² CAR, ZP 1/1/374, Milner to Chamberlain, Colonial Secretary, 18 January 1901.

³ CAR, ZP 1/1/374, Sprigg to Kitchener, 15 January 1901.

⁴ *Beaufort Courier*, 13 March 1901. Martial Law Regulations in both English and Dutch appeared on the front pages of all colonial newspapers.

West and 32.1% in the northeast Cape Colony, only 8.1% of white males rebelled in the Midlands, and 7.1% in the Karoo.

The percentage of white males who became rebels dropped to 2.7% in the western Cape, 0.8% in the eastern Cape and 0.5% in the southern Cape. The numbers of white males that rebelled in the western Cape increased after the eastern Cape commandos were driven into the northwest and western Cape in the latter part of 1901.⁵ Percentages cannot be calculated for the northwest Cape, as there were no census figures to base the statistics on. In the so-called Native Territory 26 white males of the 130 who lived in the region rebelled.

These estimates are derived in hindsight, but at the time nobody knew to what heights the rebellion would climb. Lord Kitchener was disappointed that the operations in the Cape Colony did not get faster results, and complained to Milner on 3 January 1901, "that we need an organization to deal with these raiders as the Boers dealt with Jameson."⁶ Despite raising the Colonial Defence Force, and hind pursuit by numerous columns, only 54 Cape rebels were captured under arms between January and 12 April 1901. Among them was Japie Hauptfleisch, who was killed in the Beaufort West district on 7 February, and Stephanus Nel of Richmond who died of wounds on 20 February 1901 in a Cape Town hospital.⁷ About 22 rebels from the first invasion were captured in the Boer Republics and became POWs.⁸ Eight other POWs pretended they were Free Staters and not colonists, and their true identities were only discovered later.⁹ The remaining 29 rebels were captured either under arms in Bedford in January 1901, by Col Scobell's forces at Jansenville in March, or were found hiding at home. They were paroled and later disfranchised; some only appearing in court in 1902. Christian Jacobus Auret of Aberdeen was sentenced to two years imprisonment and fined £100 on 7 March 1901, but the GOC Cape Colony districts quashed this conviction, as the military had no jurisdiction over the courts at that stage.¹⁰ The British captured Petrus Jacobus Bellingan of Aberdeen, who had joined Kritzingen's commando. He

⁵ Cape of Good Hope, *Statistical Register*, Population Census of 1891 and 1904; Shearing, 'The Rebel Record'; See Addendum 1 and 2. The percentages were calculated from the census figures of 1891 and 1904 and the 'Rebel Record' by D & T Shearing and are intended only as a rough guide.

⁶ NAR, CO; FK794, Kitchener to Milner, 3 January 1901.

⁷ Shearing, 'The Rebel Record'.

⁸ FAR, SO/POW list. AJ Janse van Rensburg of Barkly West captured in Kroonstad, JM Beyers of Stellenbosch captured in Pretoria, G Olivier of Windsorton captured in Klerksdorp, JP Otto of Barkly East captured in Wolmaranstad, PJ Prinsloo of Cradock captured in Hope Town, PJJ van der Walt of Vryburg captured in Wolmaranstad, JJ Albertse of Burghersdorp captured in Aliwal North, HD de Waal of Williston captured in Bloemfontein, PJ du Plooy of Albert captured in Lady Brand, JM Aucamp of Dordrecht captured in Petersburg, JG Burger of Graaff-Reinet captured in Dewetsdorp, HJ Kruger of Burghersdorp captured in Barbeton, Hugo Ernest Rieve of Cape Town captured in Petrusburg, JF Wolff of Robertson captured at Pienaars Nek.

⁹ CAR, AG 3558. JH Barnard of Barkly East, CG du Toit of Clanwilliam, DJJ van Rensburg of Barkly East, RP Wait of Humansdorp, JA Coetzee of Albert, HWJ Lategan of Albert, JP Kruger of Calvinia, FJ van Zyl of Burghersdorp.

¹⁰ CAR, Cd 981, Auret's name appears as Aurex. He was sentenced 7 March 1901.

was released from prison in February 1901 and returned to his home at Oorlogspoort and his father, who was a member of the Legislative Council.¹¹ This kind of news must have been an encouragement for other young men to join the life of adventure. Bellingan broke his parole and later joined Jan Theron's Commando; he was fatally wounded in September when the commando attacked Heidelberg, Cape.¹²

A train is wrecked

The question that was asked in March 1901 was, were the very harsh sentences inflicted in March on three transport drivers, SJG Nienaber, JP Nienaber and JA Nieuwoudt of Hanover, who were executed by the military at De Aar on 5 March 1901 as train wreckers, justified? Or were they innocent men who paid the price for a deed done by Gen Wynand Malan; a reaction to Kitchener's disappointment over the Middelburg peace and a signal that the British had no desire to be lenient? Surridge refers to Kitchener's exasperation that the negotiations had broken down on the failure to agree on an amnesty for the Cape colonial rebels. "We are now carrying the war on", he wrote, "to be able to put 200 or 300 Dutchmen in prison at the end of it. It seems to me absurd and wrong, and I wonder the Chancellor of the Exchequer did not have a fit."¹³

The incident arose from the derailment of a train at Taaibosch Siding, not far from Hanover, by Capt Wynand Malan who was hoping to capture horses, food, arms and ammunition for his men. Instead a duplicate train, carrying gravel and labourers, running ahead of the passenger train, was derailed, and the fireman, two soldiers and two blacks were killed.¹⁴ Malan, who later insisted that only his commando was involved in the derailment, rode off towards Murraysburg soon after.

The surviving six black labourers later identified the Hanover transport drivers in Court (who had arrived at the station with forage for the military purely by chance) under oath as the men who robbed them and killed one of their group, Dodwani Kabeni, as he tried to escape. They stated in evidence that the transport drivers also took part in wrecking the train. The wagon driver, Jan van den Berg, who turned King's evidence, said he and the transport drivers were involved in derailing the train and he confirmed the robbery and the shooting of Kabeni. Furthermore the Attorney General, while objecting to the military

¹¹ *George and Knysna Herald*, 18 April 1898, 'Legislative Council'.

¹² FAR, SO/POW file; CAR, AG3558; Memorial in DRC grounds Heidelberg.

¹³ Keith Surridge, 'The Politics of War: Lord Kitchener and the Settlement of the South African War, 1901-1902', in Cuthbertson, Greg, Grundlingh, Albert and Suttie, Mary-Lynn, *Writing a Wider War*, p221.

¹⁴ The tradition in the area is that the train driver died of tetanus.

taking over the case, described the transport drivers as “train wreckers, murderers and robbers.”¹⁵ Nevertheless many local Afrikaners accepted Malan’s word that the transport drivers were not involved in the train incident, and the tradition in the Hanover district is that there was a miscarriage of justice. An obelisk in the Hanover graveyard, erected to the memory of the transport drivers, reads, “Onskuldig dood veroordeel.”¹⁶

A farmer is executed

The news also spread in March 1901 that Gorringe’s soldiers had shot a wounded farmer against his kraal wall while his children watched. The Cape Attorney General, Rose Innes, was stunned. “It seems incredible that a wounded prisoner could under any circumstances be executed by a British officer,” he reported, appalled. This was exactly what the furious Col G Gorringe had ordered. The farmer, Hendrik van Heerden of Sewefontein, Middelburg, had been implicated in feeding some men belonging to either, Kritzinger of Lötter’s commando that had trekked through his farm. When a Lieut F Kirby and QMS T Bean found suspicious horse tracks near the farm, they decided to take Van Heerden to Gorringe’s camp under escort; and en route a concealed marksman wounded all three. The colonial volunteers were taken to the army camp by ambulance and Van Heerden’s wife nursed the farmer at home and an army doctor visited him.

The following day a military court was convened at a neighbouring farm without Van Heerden being present; a despatch rider took the findings to Gorringe, en route to Pearston. He rashly decided to make an example of Van Heerden and admitted later that he did not refer the matter to a higher authority. A teacher on a nearby farm, Alfred Mawby from Rietvlei, was present when Capt Smolle arrived with a troop and to the horror of those present heard the death sentence read to Van Heerden. Despite his protests the farmer was executed moments later. Mawby also heard the volley of the firing party, although he refused to be a witness to the execution.¹⁷ Privately Kitchener let Rose Innes know he was sickened and upset by the affair. In public he threw his weight behind the newly formed column and claimed vaguely that the proceedings had been sent back to the Judge Advocate General, Gen Sir Francis June, and that he had approved a General Field Court Martial.¹⁸ In both cases the families of the colonists

¹⁵ CAR, AG 2017, 14 March 1901, Telegram from Intelligence De Aar to Intelligence Cape Town, Report from Assistant Magistrate De Aar to Attorney General Cape Town, 11 March 1901; Pieterse, *Oorlogsavonture van Genl Wynand Malan*, p156; De Kersauson de Pennendreff, *Ek en die Vierkleur*, p26.

¹⁶ CAR, Cd 981, Section 18, p125, Death penalties inflicted. Translation: *Sentenced to death although innocent*.

¹⁷ *Midland News*, 13 March 1901; NAR, FK 800, Report of Rose Innes to Milner, 27 April 1901; *South African Field Force Casualty List*, Section January to June 1901, Gorringe’s Column.

¹⁸ Wright (ed), *Sir James Rose Innes, Selected Correspondence, 1884-1906*, p281.

involved discovered that their civilian status did not necessarily protect them; that war spreads into the civilian population. The question is, did these two events drive the colonists in the region to rebellion? In 1901 fourteen colonists rebelled in Hanover and 101 in Middelburg, but nearly all of them had already joined commandos in January and February. It is possible that farmers who professed not to be involved in the war helped those in the saddle with food and fodder when the pursuit was hot because of these two incidents.¹⁹

In March the worried, newly appointed Governor, WF Hely-Hutchinson, wrote to J Chamberlain that "both in the northwest and the Midlands considerable numbers of colonists are reported to have joined the enemy, who seem to dominate the countryside in the Middelburg and Graaff-Reinet districts."²⁰ Overall this assessment did not prove to be accurate, but certainly in the Cradock district Lötter raised a commando with ease. Warnings were sent by the authorities warn youngsters in April 1901 that captured rebels would soon get no mercy.

War exists between states. When citizens raise a rebellion their future as illegitimate belligerents is dependent on the success or otherwise of the warring states. Ironically it was the Colonial Parliament, not the Boer Republics that afforded protection to the Class 2 rebels. Once Martial Law was extended virtually throughout the Cape Colony, the Cabinet's power waned, after Parliament was prorogued during August 1901 and did not convene until the war was over.²¹ While the Attorney General did intervene on behalf of colonists over excesses in the application of Martial Law, the rebel was on his own after the Military took over the Courts. Here they paid a huge price for their own overconfidence in supporting Steyn's dream of victory. Seven hundred rebels would receive lengthy prison sentences and 35 others would be executed.²²

Leading the Tommies a merry dance

Willem and Hendrik Steyn of Kaalplaas, Cradock joined the Boers under Capt J Smith in March after their oxen in the Zwagershoek had been commandeered without their knowledge. Their mother, Mrs Hester Steyn, was reluctant to allow them to join the commando although eventually she gave in. Shortly afterwards she wrote to them saying their father, Charl Jacobus Steyn, had been threatened with

¹⁹ CAR, AG 2106, folio 388, returns of rebel, June 1903. Most of the Middelburg rebels had already joined Lötter by the time Van Heerden was executed at Sewefontein.

²⁰ NAR, FK 899, Hely-Hutchinson to Chamberlain, 17 April 1901.

²¹ CAR, GH 32a/22, Folio 372, Governor to Chamberlain stating that Parliament was prorogued on 27 August 1901 to 18 September 1901. The date was then moved to 20 November 1901 and eventually Parliament reconvened after the war was over.

²² Amery (ed), *The Times History*, V1, p563 for statistics.

imprisonment if they did not return home. They ignored the letter, Steyn senior absconded and joined Lötter's Commando. Mrs Steyn then sent an official proclamation to the commando, in which the authorities undertook not to prosecute them for rebellion if they returned home before an unspecified date. Willem also ignored this, and persuaded his brother Hendrik, who wanted to leave for the sake of their mother, to remain on commando. Willem Steyn, who was then sixteen, wrote that he was young, full of adventure and life on commando suited him. He said the rebels dreamed "of scattering the British like chaff and making mincemeat of them." Very few of the rebels, who had joined when it was easy to stay out of the way of the British, were able to withstand the lure of war and the persuasions of the Free Staters that a jolly life on commando would continue indefinitely.²³

On 12 April 1901 the Indemnity and Special Tribunals Act's authority to convict new cases of a political nature ended, although it retained jurisdiction over cases in process. There was a tentative move for charges of a political nature to be heard in the common courts, but news of Boer successes, like the Zeekoeigat debacle in Aberdeen on 9 April 1901, probably put a stop to that.

Military tribunals

The Governor's Minute to Kitchener of 17 April 1901 stated that the ministers admitted there were districts in the Colony where, despite the courts being open, they could not deal with cases of treason and rebellion, and it was impossible in disturbed areas to bring rebels to trial and get the witnesses to court in the near future. The Ministers consented to the Military Tribunals, however they requested that Courts Martial should deal with the cases that endangered the safety of His Majesty's forces, and offences such as the active bearing of arms with the enemy. Military Courts should hear treacherous acts that endangered the troops, as well as wanton personal outrages on His Majesty's subjects. In addition the Ministers requested that ordinary courts should deal with cases such as consorting and trading with the enemy. Experienced officers should be in charge of the tribunals, with possibly a magistrate or some civil official with knowledge of law sitting with them. It was also requested that the evidence should be fully recorded and all sentences confirmed by Lord Kitchener. Where the death penalty was invoked, they asked that a competent legal adviser should read the legal proceedings. The accused should be allowed to cross-examine and call witnesses on his own behalf. Finally they asked that a copy of proceedings should be sent to the Attorney General for record purposes. The Ministers also

²³ Taffy and David Shearing, *The Brave Boer Boy and Other Stories*, 'Off to Join the Rebels', p58.

requested that an official notice proclaiming the Courts Martial should appear in the Government Gazette.²⁴

The official announcement, signed by Kitchener, General, Commander-in-Chief of Forces in South Africa, appeared in English and Dutch in the Government Gazette on 23 April 1901. It stated that after 22 April 1901 all people residing in the Cape Colony where Martial Law prevailed, and who were actively in arms or incited others to take up arms, or actively aided or assisted the enemy, or committed any overt act by which the safety of His Majesty's forces or subjects was endangered, should on arrest be tried by Court Martial and on conviction be liable to the severest penalty of the law.²⁵

Offences were classified into three categories: trial by military court, minor breaches of Martial Law regulations, and common law offences. Military courts had the right to inflict the death sentence as long as the three officers concurred. An officer in command could convene a military court, or one of his officers not under the rank of captain could act as his deputy.²⁶ The announcement of the Military Tribunals did not stop the recruitment of colonists who wanted to join the commandos. Apart from Lötter, Malan also recruited numerous rebels in the Cradock district in May 1901.²⁷

The President and two Assessors of the first Military Court were ready on 23 April 1901 to try High Treason cases handed to them. Col W Beauchamp Doran of the Royal Irish Regiment, Maj RL Mullins, 2nd Dragoon Guards, seconded to Brabant's Horse, and Lieut TP Dawson were sworn in by order of Lieut-Gen John French. The first Tribunal sat at Dordrecht on 23 April 1901, the day the notice appeared in the Government Gazette, and the same day that three rebels were captured near Honeynestkloof, Barkly East. Gert Jacobus Myburgh of Wilgerivier, Somerset East, Jacobus Johannes Sauer of Kleinhoek and Johannes Christian Troskie of Baviaanskrantz, Cradock were driven straight to court and all were charged with attempted murder and High Treason. Myburgh and Troskie pleaded not guilty on the first count and guilty on the second. Sauer pleaded guilty on both counts, but altered his plea to not guilty on the first count. The prisoners laughed at each other in the dock, first treating the proceedings as a joke. They were either not aware that they were about to receive an exemplary punishment or they were putting on a bold face. The President reprimanded them, saying they would not find this court a laughing matter. The newspaper said there was an air of reality and earnestness at the Military Tribunal that compared well with the Civil High Treason Court.²⁸

²⁴ CAR, GH Minute 118, Hely-Hutchinson to Kitchener, 17 April 1901.

²⁵ Cape of Good Hope, *Government Gazette*, 23 April 1901, Notice stating that rebels captured under arms would be tried in Military Courts.

²⁶ Amery (ed), *The Times History*, V1, p563.

²⁷ Pieterse, *Oorlogsavonture van Genl Wynand Malan*, p210.

²⁸ *Somerset Budget*, 26 June 1901; *Frontier Guardian*, 26 June 1901.

Members of the Dordrecht District Volunteer Guard positively identified all three accused. Capt WT Clark deposed that Tpr Thomas Gardiner had been wounded in the fight against the Boers at Ricksuill about two yards away from him by enemy fire the previous day. He arrested Sauer who was lying wounded in a farmhouse, and who admitted he had been wounded in the same fight. He had abandoned his rifle, but handed over three cartridges. Myburgh surrendered and explained he was Sergeant Smith's groom and tore his coat carrying a gun. Troskie was captured wounded and his rifle was retrieved from the place he had indicated. The magazine was loaded; the barrel was dirty and recently fired.

The accused were informed of their rights to give evidence under oath in the witness box or they could make statements. Troskie stated that he was captured before Tpr Gardiner was wounded. The Court adjourned. When the members of the Court Martial returned, the President announced to the accused that they had pleaded guilty to the charge of High Treason and had been found guilty of that charge. Asked if they had anything to say in mitigation of sentence, Myburgh and Troskie pleaded for mercy. Sauer said as he had surrendered he had nothing to say, but the President pointed out that being captured wounded was not the same as surrendering as he could not get away. On 24 June 1901 Sauer was sentenced to death in Dordrecht, commuted to a life sentence for High Treason under arms and attempted murder. Troskie was sentenced to a ten-year prison term and Myburgh to five years. All three were shipped to Bermuda to serve their prison sentences.

The President's statement to the Court formed the basis on which that and all later Military Tribunals were based. All prisoners before the Bar were identified as British subjects, who had been arrested while forming a portion of a Boer commando, an illegal and unlawful gathering. They had fired upon and wounded one of the King's troops. All took part in or formed a portion of that commando, and were equally guilty, whether armed or unarmed. His Majesty's forces had been attacked and fired at, and if one of them had been killed the prisoners would have been tried for murder instead of attempted murder or a lesser charge.²⁹

Four days later a further sixteen rebels, captured at Wildefontein on 6 June 1901, appeared before the same Military Tribunal. They pleaded not guilty to the crime of assaulting one Gibbons, a Private in the CMR, and wounding him with intent to kill. All pleaded guilty to the crime of High Treason in that they joined the forces of the Boer Republics with hostile intent, and carried out war against their said Sovereign and his Government. The Prosecutor, Capt CT Huddleston, directed the attention of the Court to Chapter 7 of the Manual of Military Law, stating that "any person assisting another in the commission of an offence was equally responsible as though he had committed it himself", and Section 13 which

²⁹ *The Frontier Guardian*, 21 June 1901.

stated that ignorance of the law was no defense in a criminal charge. It was proved that all prisoners were British subjects, loot taken from Jamestown and elsewhere had been found on them, and that Private Gibbons had been wounded on the same morning and at the same place where prisoners had been captured. Johannes Petrus Coetzee and Frederick Marais had been captured from where the troops had been fired on from close quarters. Cornelius Classen had been overpowered with difficulty. The prisoners were found individually guilty on the first count, as well as the second to which they had pleaded guilty. After being found guilty of High Treason, pleas in mitigation of sentence were heard. Marais of Middelburg stated "that the English caught a lot of our people for doing nothing, and put them in prison, and that was why I joined the Boer forces." This probably refers to Class 1 rebels. Charles Goedhals said he did not know why he joined the commando and then added, obscurely, that he was shortsighted. HJ Coetzee complained he was compelled to join. The remainder had nothing to say.³⁰ The death sentence on Marais was promulgated in Middelburg, on Classen in Somerset East and on Coetzee in Cradock. The other convicted rebels captured at Wildefontein were sentenced to death, commuted to prison terms for life on Bermuda. A coloured groom was freed, and Johannes van der Walt of Middelburg convinced his captors that he was Johannes Strydsman of Grootdam, Rouxville in the Vechtkop Field Cornetcy, and he became POW no 20449 and was sent to Bermuda as a Free Stater.³¹

Ceremonial parades

The promulgation of the death sentences at large ceremonial parades with Imperial and Colonial Defence Force troops and Town Guards in attendance, sent shock waves through the community. They were designed to make a forceful impression so that the news would spread rapidly. Their purpose was to convince colonists that Lord Kitchener was determined to end rebellion in the Cape Colony, and would use all his powers to do so. All male residents, Town Councils and JPs were compelled to attend, and stores were closed while the ceremony was proceeding. People whose loyalty was suspect were placed in prominent positions, so that they were forced to witness the sentencing and realize that harsher measures against the convicted Cape rebels were the new reality.³² Research shows that the first person executed by the military in the northeast Cape was executed with little ceremony. He was a black, Alfred Malapi, of

³⁰ *Frontier Guardian*, 28 June 1901, 'Military Courts Martial'; *Midland News*, 12 July 1901, 'Official Report of Trial'.

³¹ Steyn, 'Kaapse Rebel te Bermuda', p27; FAR, SO/POW, states Strydsman was captured near Barkly West instead of Barkly East on 6 June 1901.

³² *The Midland News*, 12 July 1901.

Aliwal North, a non-voter in Ward 1. He had been working for the British military as a handyman while spying for the Boer forces. He was executed in December 1900 dressed in khaki uniform.³³

The hanging of Marais at Middelburg on 10 July 1901, Coetzee at Cradock on 13 July 1901 and Cornelius Claasen at Somerset East on 23 July 1901 took place with as much publicity as possible. Accounts differ on the number of local people forced to attend. According to Jordaan's later account, crowds of local people were forced to actually witness the hangings. However a contemporary account of Coetzee's hanging states the public did not witness the hanging, but stood in the courtyard outside.³⁴ That the public manner of the hangings was a deep affront to the Afrikaners, whether they actually witnessed the hangings or not, is not argued. That does not answer the question why were they hanged in such a public manner? The reason was that the military thought it necessary to demonstrate that the executions took place.³⁵ This statement was not as unbelievable as it sounds; despite Cmdt Gideon Scheepers being executed by a firing squad before numerous witnesses in 1902, certain members of his commando were still searching for him 35 years later.³⁶ Part of the reason was that his mother refused to believe that he was dead, and consequently men appeared at intervals claiming to be her long lost son.³⁷

Reaction to the hangings

There were widespread and vehement reactions to the public hangings. Questions were asked in the lower house of Parliament at Westminster, and members voiced their indignation and great concern.³⁸ Sprigg's Cabinet protested, objecting to being identified with the result. They predicted that the violent death of Coetzee would produce a disturbing effect on the public.³⁹ The Rev DD Drew of Observatory somberly foretold; that "the blood spilt from the scaffold does not dry up, although torrents may pour on the battlefield and flow to oblivion."⁴⁰ James Butler, the Quaker Editor of the Midland News, put the blame for the executions at the door of the Sprigg Cabinet, commenting that "... had all parties recognized the seriousness of the position and seen that there could be no stability of government if

³³ *The Barkly East Reporter*, 24 September 1999; Pretorius, *Life on Commando during the Anglo Boer War 1899-1902*, p296.

³⁴ Jordaan, *Só het hulle Gesterf*, pp5,7,9; *South Africa News Weekly*, LI, 10 August 1901.

³⁵ Gerald Shaw (ed), *The Garrett Papers, letter to Sir James Rose Innes*, Van Riebeeck Society, II-15, p132 quoting FN 11 quoting Lord Stanley.

³⁶ Shearing, *Commandant Gideon Scheepers and the Search for his Grave*, p186.

³⁷ *Die Burger*, 'Komdt Gideon Scheepers nog in lewe, Opsienbarende bewering van man in Siekegestig', 30 September 1935, Mrs Scheepers failed to find a bump behind his ear and refused to accept him; *Evening Post*, 'Gideon Scheepers did he escape execution?' Veteran F Retief relates that a member of the firing squad told him they used blanks and he helped smuggle Scheepers out of Graaff-Reinet in 1902, 30 October 1965.

³⁸ Snyman, *Rebelle Verhoor in Kaapland*, pp57-58.

³⁹ CAR, PMO 80, Minute, Ministers to Governor, 19 July 1901.

rebellion were treated as a venial offence. They refused to pass an act that would have acted as a deterrent and treated the matter to secure the sweets of office for their own party."⁴¹

As recriminations between Kitchener and the Cape Cabinet flew, Kitchener pointed out that all rebels who surrendered would only be sentenced to a one-year gaol term.⁴² In the meanwhile Pieter W Klopper of Van Reenen's Commando, tried at Steynsburg on 17 June 1901 and found guilty of High Treason and murder, was hanged in the gaol yard at Burghersdorp on 20 July 1901.⁴³ Four days later Hendrik L Jacobs and Abraham Jooste, both of Kenhardt, were found guilty of being actively in arms and in possession of expanding cartridges, and were shot by firing squad at Kenhardt. The execution of Klopper at Burghersdorp and Jooste and Jacobs at Kenhardt appeared to have had little impact on rebel recruitment in the areas they came from.⁴⁴

The rebels, relying on their Parliament to protect them, were devastated by the executions.⁴⁵ In order to get back the initiative, Cmdt Kritzingen issued a proclamation stating that annexation of certain districts by the Free State was still in force. No forage or horses were to be moved to towns. Those reporting the movements of Boer commandos would be fined £50 or imprisoned for 6 months. All blacks who passed information on their own initiative could be looked upon as English spies and shot.⁴⁶ At his own trial on 17 April 1902 Kritzingen later stated that De Wet refused to sanction the proclamation, but the damage was done.⁴⁷

The War Office then informed Kitchener that rebellion alone did not justify the death penalty. Accordingly sniping, train wrecking, arson and killing of unarmed blacks were added to indictments where applicable. The situation changed dramatically for the Boer forces as a result of Kritzingen's Proclamation, when it was announced that burghers and aliens now became liable to be charged in court and would no longer automatically just be sent to a prisoner-of-war camp to sit out the war. Parties of Free Staters left the Cape Colony, complaining that it was now too dangerous to fight there.⁴⁸

Cmdt Malan and Judge Hugo went to consult Steyn on the extraordinarily severe sentences - aware the courts were posing a threat to rebel recruitment. Next 29 men from Cmdt Scheepers' commando were captured at Onbedacht, Graaff-Reinet as the commandos were driven out of the

⁴⁰ *SA News Weekly*, 24 July 1901.

⁴¹ *The Midland News*, Leader, 12 July 1901.

⁴² CAR, PMO 80, Prime Minister to Governor, 21 July 1901.

⁴³ Jooste and Oosthuizen, *So het hulle Gesterf*, pp50-55.

⁴⁴ CAR, Cd 981, section 18, Death penalties inflicted, pp126-127.

⁴⁵ CAR, PMO 79, Letter 690 from RJN Orpen, Barkly East, 20 June 1901.

⁴⁶ NAR, FK 801, Kitchener to Hely-Hutchinson, K6456, 30 June 1901; *Oudtshoorn Courant*, 27 June 1901.

⁴⁷ *De Graaff Reinetter*, 17 April 1902.

⁴⁸ Le May, *British Supremacy in South Africa*, pp100-101; Van Heerden tape, property of Mrs K Steyn, Port Elizabeth.

Camdeboo. Five Free Staters were sent to POW camps; one was later discovered to be an Albert rebel.⁴⁹ Lieut Izak Liebenberg was, however, gaoled as a suspect in the death of the Boer prisoner, Lieut Leopold Neumeyer, at Rouxville during the previous December. Two aliens lost their immunity to prosecution: Hendrik Veenstra, from Amsterdam, had been visiting an uncle at Colesberg when he joined the commandos. He was involved in the arson of various buildings in Murraysburg as well as the historic farm Vleiplaats, was found guilty of High Treason, various counts of arson and marauding. Frederick Toy, a painter from Gottenberg Sweden, who was living in Willowmore when he joined the Boers, was found guilty of High Treason and attempted murder. The pair were executed at Colesberg together with H van Vuuren on 4 September 1901.⁵⁰ The six rebels who were executed were all found guilty of additional crimes to High Treason. Les Pfeiffer of Leeuwfontein, Victoria West was captured fully armed, found guilty of attempted murder and arson; Piet Jacobus Fourie of Jansenville was found guilty of being actively in arms, two counts of murder, one of attempted murder and arson; Daniel Olewagen and Ignatious Nel were found guilty of engaging in the military forces of the enemy and attempted murder.⁵¹ The remaining dozen rebels captured at Onbedacht were all sentenced to death, but their sentences were later commuted to life sentences on Bermuda.⁵² This was a stunning blow to Scheepers' prestige and ended his five months' domination of the Midlands guerilla scene.

Orders to the firing squad

Maj Shute signed the orders for the firing squad on 18 August for the executions of Jan van Rensburg, PJ Fourie and LFS Pfeiffer. The three men were executed outside Graaff-Reinet on 19 August 1901. They were taken from the prison in an ambulance with a cavalry escort. The local Town Guard, a detachment of the Port Elizabeth Town Guard and 40 civilians were present. The ambulance stopped near the execution ground and Rev CD Murray visited them for a few minutes. The firing party under the command of Lieut Jenkins, 2nd Battalion Coldstream Guards, took up their position ten yards south of the chairs on which the prisoners were seated at 6.20am. They were blindfolded and lashed to their chairs when Lieut H Pryce Jones gave the executive order. The bullets had been filed. A volley was fired and the three chairs to which the prisoners were tied fell back with the force of the impact. After the sentence had been carried out the lashings were cut, the corpses placed on blankets and the medical officers examined

⁴⁹ FAB, SO/POW; CAR, AG 3558.

⁵⁰ Shearing, *Commandant Gideon Scheepers and the Search for his Grave*, pp99, 211,215; Bertil Häggman, Center for Research on Geopolitics, Helsingborg Sweden, mvk575b@minet.se, 2001. Toy is thought to have been a sailor who jumped ship, as there is no record that he emigrated from Sweden or even came from the Göttenberg region.

⁵¹ CAR, Cd 981, Section 18, Death penalties inflicted, pp56; Jordaan, *Só Het Hulle Gesterf*, reprint, pp10-14.

⁵² CAR, Cd 981, Section 18, Death penalties inflicted, pp127-137.

the bodies and certified that the prisoners were dead. Only after the burial was complete did the firing parties leave the grounds with the spectators. The *Eastern Province Herald* described it as a very impressive ceremony and said that the carrying out of the sentences caused a profound impression on all ranks.⁵³

There was a lot of sympathy for the condemned men. Local farmer Tom Murray wrote in his diary, "Poor devils, they are paying the penalty for their folly. It is to be hoped it will have a good effect on those still in the field."⁵⁴ For all his matter-of-fact text, Shute was not as hard a man as he seemed. He wrote in his diary that he felt the executions terribly, and contacted a friend privately asking him to intervene with Gen French to order rebels sentenced to death to be executed in their own districts. French agreed.⁵⁵ As a result executions were then held at Cradock, Tarkastad, Middelburg, Colesberg and Somerset East. It is pure speculation to say the place of execution affected the outcome, but rebel recruitment virtually ceased in the Midlands after these harsh sentences were handed down. Two stragglers from Scheepers' Commando survived after a fashion in the Sneeuberg until October, when the District Mounted Troops captured Jan Petrus and Jacobus Francois Geldenhuys. JF Geldenhuys was executed in February 1902 and his brother received a life sentence.⁵⁶

Five days before Kritzinger's Commando was shattered near Venterstad on 13 August 1901, one of his men, Hendrik J Roux of Grahamstown, was cornered at Ventershoek. Evidence was later led that he put up his hands in a token of surrender and then grabbed his rifle and fired at one Barber of the Imperial Yeomanry. Although the shot missed he was condemned for treachery and was executed by firing squad on 7 October 1901.⁵⁷ Three rebels captured on 13 August with Kritzinger included Izak Roux of Somerset East, who was found guilty of the death of Private ED Dawson who died of wounds. His death sentence however was commuted to life imprisonment. Pierre Rossouw also received a life sentence, while Stephanus David Naude of Graaff-Reinet got ten years.⁵⁸

Two standing military courts were established in July 1901 for the trial of serious offences, one at Graaff-Reinet and another in the Western districts. On 5 September the 9th Lancers and the CMR captured Cmdt Johannes Lötter and 116 of the men in his commando at Paardefontein in the Tandjiesberg near Pearston. Cmdt Lötter was charged with several offences, including treason, murder and damaging the railway. Lötter, who was not defended, hoped that if he succeeded in convincing the court that he was a Free Stater, and the bag containing his burgher rights had been lost or was stolen from him the night he

⁵³ Shute's diary, 18 August 1901; *Eastern Province Herald*, 19 August 1901.

⁵⁴ Murray, Roodebloem diaries, 19 July 1901.

⁵⁵ Shute's diary, pp72-75.

⁵⁶ CAR, Cd 981, Section 18, Death penalties inflicted, p78; Jordaan, *Só Het hulle Gesterf*, reprint, p31.

⁵⁷ Shute's diary, p79.

⁵⁸ FAR, SO/POW; CAR, Cd 1364, Royal Commission into the Revision of Martial Law sentences.

was captured, he would be treated as a POW. It was a forlorn hope; he was found guilty of being actively in arms, two charges of murder, five charges of disgraceful conduct of a cruel kind and three charges of destroying the railways and marauding, and sentenced to be hanged. The sentence was promulgated on 11 October in the market square in Middelburg in the presence of the leading residents of the town. Lötter fainted on hearing the sentence and was executed by firing squad a day latter.

Three days later Pieter Wolfaardt, captured with Lötter, was also executed by firing squad. At his trial he refused to say anything except that he knew he would be shot if he was captured. He pleaded guilty to High Treason and murder. His widowed mother had remarried Gerrit Viljoen and their house in Middelburg was on the route that Wolfaardt traveled on his way to his execution. As the cart was pulled up the hill only the muffled sound of the horses hooves and the tramp of the soldier's boots could be heard. When the cart passed their front door Wolfaardt's stepfather came out onto the open stoep, hat in hand. Women could be heard weeping in the passage. The moment he saw Viljoen, Wolfaardt sat up straight and called out firmly, "Come, let us sing", and set the old hymn going in his deep bass voice, "Come let us go forward with courage and with faith in His Word. Though the way leads through grief and fear, the end will be blessed near." The courageous Pieter Wolfaardt was heard singing all the way to where the 'Chair' memorial now stands; when the cart stopped there was a pause and a volley of shots followed.⁵⁹ After the war Lötter and Wolfaardt were reburied in the same coffin in the old Middelburg cemetery.

Of his three other lieutenants, Jacobus Schoeman was shot at Tarkastad, while Dirk Breedt and Willem Kruger were shot at Cradock. Zirk Lötter or Luther, doctor to the commando, was sentenced to seven years imprisonment. The death sentences of 103 of the men were commuted to life imprisonment and one was convicted to ten years in prison. Seven youths, also sentenced to death, had their sentences commuted to receiving strokes with the rod, and were gaoled locally until the end of the war. Johannes Joubert of Hanover, did not think their sentences too harsh. He said, "Penal servitude for life is better than being on commando with its terrible hardships. We were driven from place to place, our horses were in poor condition, and we had hardly anything to eat."⁶⁰

Research into the Military Courts is hampered by the total dearth of Court records. These records were taken to England after the war, and according Professor A Davey, researching material for *Breaker Morant and the Bushveldt Carabineers*, the files were destroyed in the bombing of London during World

⁵⁹ Shearing, *Commandant Johannes Lötter and his Rebels*, p42. The hymn reads

"Kom tree ons dan bemoedigd voort

"In vast vertrouwe op Sy Woord

"Al lei ons weg deur smart en vrees

"Tog sal die einde salig wees."

⁶⁰ Shearing, *Commandant Johannes Lötter and his Rebels*, pp48-63.

War II.⁶¹ There is not enough information to understand why Pieter W van Heerden, of Vaalvlei, Tarkastad, who joined Kritzingers' Commando on 6 March 1901 and was captured in August 1901 on his farm, was later executed in Tarkastad on 11 November 1901. There was a skirmish between Cmdt Stoffel Botha and the Queenstown DMT, who were driving 800 horses to protection camps. Riding with Botha was Van Heerden, described as large, middle-aged and virtually blind. The Cape Law Department later protested, saying there was little evidence to show why Van Heerden should have suffered the death penalty. The case was also heavily criticized because he was partially sighted.⁶²

Deep resentment was felt over the executions as they had, as Edmund Garrett, Editor of the Cape Times, succinctly put it, "committed a crime which is deemed no crime." He remarked "soldiers think they atone for muddling their own business by muddling our past as well."⁶³ A family member of Peter Wolfaardt however commented that he was not surprised his great-uncle was executed. He pulled his finger over his throat with a telling gesture and shook his head, saying it was unacceptable to fire after the white flag was hoisted.⁶⁴

The execution of Willem Hofmeyr Louw of Colesberg was a great shock to the public as he was the son of the Rev AA Louw of Noorder Paarl, and his sisters described him as a soft and lovable person.⁶⁵ But war changes people, and Louw was implicated in a particularly ghoulish murder. Louw had a base in the Free State in 1901 from where he raided into the Colesberg district. During August Louw, Joseph Coetzee and Joseph Brown of Petrusville had been involved in a shoot out. Shortly afterwards they met a farmer and instructed him to bury a body. He found two bodies; the scout had died from a bullet wound, but the second man was mutilated; his throat was cut and his nose, cheeks and ears had also been slashed off and he had bled to death.⁶⁶ Shortly afterwards Brown was killed in a skirmish and the colonial forces then pursued the rebels until their horses collapsed. They surrendered near Taaibosfontein on 23 September 1901. Louw was tried at Graaff-Reinet and found guilty of being actively in arms, the murder of a scout, George Louw, another murder and marauding. He was executed by firing squad at Colesberg on 23 November 1901.⁶⁷ As a result of the raids by Louw and others into the Colesberg district,

⁶¹ Arthur M Davey (ed), *Breaker Morant and the Bushveldt Carabineers*, plxiv.

⁶² Snyman, *Rebelle Verhoor in Kaapland*, p5; Jordaan, *Só Het Hulle Gesterf*, p34; CAR, D/D 1/72 2515, Daily Diary re Tarkastad.

⁶³ Shaw (ed), *The Garrett Papers*, 1 November 1901.

⁶⁴ Pers com, PJ Wolfaardt, Aberdeen, 1976.

⁶⁵ Jordaan, *Só Het Hulle Gesterf*, reprint, p23.

⁶⁶ NAR, FK 823, Murder and mutilation of two coloured scouts, 11 August 1901.

⁶⁷ Emma Horn, *Ds AA Louw (1827-1908) en sy Gesin*, pp168-92; *SA News Weekly*, 23 September, 1901; CAR, Cd 981, Section 18, Death penalties inflicted, p129.

all families connected to the rebels had been cleared from their farms.⁶⁸ Once the raids stopped, rebels on parole were allowed to return to their farms for Christmas and New Year.

By 1902 the trappings and ceremony that attended some of the early executions had fallen away. This researcher met 93 year old Jan Daniel Lotter of Nordsdoringkraal, Somerset East, who was twelve when he went with his parents, Frans and Johanna Lotter, who had been ordered to attend the shooting of Francois Edward Davis, a deserter from Nesbitt's Horse who joined the Boers when Kritzingen scattered their contingent near Pearston in March 1901.⁶⁹ Davis was captured in the Wepener district with four other Boers on 15 October 1901. He was found guilty in Graaff-Reinet on 7 December 1901 of being actively in arms and was sentenced to death. He was listed incorrectly as "sentence commuted to life imprisonment."⁷⁰

Lotter said on 25 January 1902 that they all had to walk to where they were going to shoot Davis. The crowd began to straggle after the wagon as they walked to Klein Bosrivier outside Somerset East and the soldiers shouted for them to keep up. The wagon driver could not manage the mules and almost got bogged down in some water near the execution site. Eventually even Davis seemed to get impatient and offered to take the reins, saying he was a good driver, but of course it was not allowed. Davis was a strong Tommy, said Lotter, he just sat in the chair like it was every day. When the soldiers were ready to fire his mother, Johanna Lotter, held his sisters tight and they buried their heads in her skirts and did not look. Jan said he peered round his father and as they shot Davis he saw him fall, stool and all, into the grave. Because he looked, said Lotter, he still had the most vivid memories of the whole day.⁷¹

All sorts of safeguards were built into the old system. There was a lengthy Preliminary Investigation by a magistrate, prior to the hearing. *Prima facie* evidence was essential or the case was thrown out; in 1789 cases under the Indemnity and Special Tribunals Act the Attorney General declined to prosecute. But these safeguards fell away after the military took over the courts.

Courts under different jurisdictions

The consequences of having courts under different jurisdictions operating at the same time can best be illustrated when the severity of the Martial Law cases heard in Graaff-Reinet in September 1901 are compared to the mildness of the Treason Trial cases heard in Burghersdorp in the same month. In Graaff-Reinet 77 convicted rebels were sentenced to death, commuted to prison sentences for life by

⁶⁸ Pers com, BJ van Zijl of Outshoorn, V/C Van Zijl's grandson, 6 September 2003.

⁶⁹ Pers com, JD Lotter, Aberdeen, born 1889 information given 22 September 1982

⁷⁰ CAR, CD 981, Death penalties inflicted; Jooste and Oosthuizen, (eds), *Só Het hulle Gesterf*, pp128-129.

⁷¹ Pers com, Lotter, 1982.

military courts. In contrast in Burghersdorp about 750 cases were heard. Four hundred and forty nine voters and 234 non-voters were found guilty of High Treason and disfranchised for five years. Forty-one cases were withdrawn due to insufficient evidence. Six accused were dead and 25 were found not guilty.⁷²

At Mafeking only ten Class 1 rebels were released on bail in 1901 after a year in gaol. They had to remain in Mafeking and report to the Magistrate every fortnight, give personal sureties of £2,000 and obtain two guarantors for £500 each. The Magistrate pointed out that none of them was worth £2,000, and they had signed as a matter of form.⁷³

A further complication in their specific cases was the interpreting of a thorny legal issue; to what extent was a rebel forced to obey a direct order from a superior officer. A difficult situation arose at Mafeking, where, after the town was relieved, all rebels within reach had been arrested and committed to gaol. As a result the prosecution was not assisted by voluntary admissions of guilt, and all charges had to be proven in court.⁷⁴

On 4 October 1901 the Presiding Officer of the Special Courts discharged Johannes Stephanus Maritz and Barend Christoffel Lottering, who had been charged with the murder of Monthusetsi on 20 February 1900. The court found Maritz and Lottering's orders to shoot blacks was carried out directly in accordance with an order by Gen Snyman, and was in consequence of these blacks carrying dispatches through the Boer lines and raiding cattle for the besieged garrison. Snyman promulgated an order that all blacks coming out or going in were to be shot and not arrested. The court found it proved that the deceased and some other natives had been sent out to capture cattle, and that the deceased were returning to Mafeking at the time Maritz was ordered to shoot him in accordance with orders. The Court held that though he was a rebel, he had become a member of the republican forces and was protected by the order. Lottering was similarly protected by the order given by Maritz, who was his V/C and superior officer. Though Snyman's order was illegal, it was not so obviously illegal that a man in Maritz' position would have known it was illegal. Maritz was later sentenced to four years and Lottering to three years imprisonment.⁷⁵

However when Judge WH Solomons took over the bench he made a landmark decision and ruled otherwise in the trials of five other Mafeking Class 1 rebels when he handed down the only death sentences under the Indemnity and Special Tribunals Act. Louis Brink of Faith, Arnoldus M Reineke of

⁷² CAR, Cd 1364, Royal Commission into the Revision of Martial Law Cases; *Eastern Province Herald*, 19 September 1901.

⁷³ CAR, AG 2038, Folios 13 and 19, General Observations by Clerk at Upington, 9 October 1900, and Statement by HR Dale, 14 May 1901.

⁷⁴ CAR, AG 2038, Folio 19, Report on treason prosecution, District Mafeking, Bean Clerk, Upington, 9 October 1901.

⁷⁵ CAR, AG 2038 (2), Telegram Mafeking Special Court, 4 October 1901.

Papesvlakte, John Thomas Burke, Hendrik Bruwer and Dirk Rhenier van Rooyen were also accused of shooting blacks during the siege. Their defense was that when blacks in the vicinity of Mafeking began stealing from Boer farmers, they were ordered by Gen Snyman to chastise them. Judge Solomons ruled that Gen Snyman's orders were not admissible evidence. As a result all the accused were consequently found guilty of murder as charged. The death sentence on Hendrik T Bruwer was commuted to fifteen years, that of John Thomas Burke to twenty years and the death sentences of Kalebe and Dirk Renier van Rooyen to fifteen years.⁷⁶ Brink and Reineke were hanged by executioner Blake on 28 December 1901 in the presence of the Deputy Sheriff and the District Surgeon, and were the only two Class 1 rebels to be executed. The papers reported that a large crowd assembled in the vicinity of the gaol, and the blacks showed great interest in the hangings, as this was the first palpable local punishment for very frequent, cold-blooded shooting of blacks during the siege.⁷⁷ A Baralong, Abraham Matuba, was sentenced to five years imprisonment with hard labour by the same court.⁷⁸

The Special Court in Kimberley continued its function of trying cases under the Indemnity and Special Tribunals Act. All Class 1 rebels were permanently disfranchised and additional sentences were handed out. Of the fifteen Herbert Class 1 rebels the heaviest sentences meted out in September/October 1901 were to the former commandant of the Douglas rebels, Jacobus Scholtz, who was sentenced to six years in gaol, Marthinus Lotter of Campbell got five years and Gert Cloete of Campbell was sentenced to two years. Cornelius Faber of Fabersputs, where Col Spence of the DEOVR was killed, was fined £1,000 or one year.

Of the fourteen Vryburg Class 1 rebels the heaviest sentences were meted out in October 1901 to Jan Gabriel Kriel of Holpan, who was fined £500 or fifteen months imprisonment. Johannes Jacobus Francois Joubert of Vaallaagte who was sentenced to eighteen months imprisonment and Abraham Paulus Pretorius of Bottelfontein who was sentenced to one year's imprisonment and a fine of £500 or a further nine months. Hendrik van Rooyen of Mooifontein was sentenced to two years and a fine of £500 or a further twelve months and the Rev David Wilcocks of Vryburg was sentenced to one year.

Of the Kimberley Class 1 rebels the heaviest additional sentences were meted out to Pieter Hendrik du Preez of Warrenton, who was fined £1,000 or eighteen months with hard labour; Jan Jacobs Nel of Salt Pan, who had said in Warrenton that it was their duty to repulse the British Government, and who went on to fight at Modder River, was sentenced to three years of which one had to be with hard labour. Petrus Johannes Perold of Warrenton was sentenced to eighteen months and fined £500 or a

⁷⁶ Snyman, *Die Helde Album*, p133.

⁷⁷ *Somerset Budget*, 28 December 1901.

⁷⁸ CAR, AG 2117, Special Court under the Indemnity and Special Tribunals Act; Cape of Good Hope House of Assembly, C20, 1904.

further eighteen months. Gabriel Pieter Vorster, a JP under the republicans, £1,000 or 12 months' imprisonment with hard labour.

The law came down heavily on Cape Police deserters. John Bothma, an ex-Cape Policeman, received a seven-year sentence for High Treason, theft and desertion. Willem Jacobus Espach of Blikfontein, who joined the Boer Special Police in the Boer forces, got three years imprisonment. Peter Christian Massyn of Danielskuil was sentenced to five years imprisonment.⁷⁹ Whether today the punishment meted out to the individual Class 1 rebels is called fair or otherwise, it had little value as a deterrent to rebellion because the sentences were handed down towards the end of 1901 in the same period that death penalties were being inflicted under Martial Law for cases of High Treason and murder or attempted murder.

On 16 September at Zoutlief a strong party of 22 Boers ambushed a colonial force, but instead of attacking they surrendered on condition their lives were spared. Eight of the accused, charged with High Treason, were handed down sentences ranging from twenty years imprisonment to five years plus fines, while fourteen charged with High Treason plus murder received sentences ranging from life to twenty years on 10 October 1901.⁸⁰ It is probable that these rebels had been warned that Jansen, Rautenbach and the Kuhn brothers, who had been captured, would get the death sentence. Johannes Jansen of New York farm and Nicolaas Rautenbach of Massouws Kop were captured at Masiel, Mafeking on 3 September 1900. Jansen who had been on commando since 1899 was found guilty of being actively in arms and the theft of four horses.⁸¹ Nicolaas Rautenbach had fought under De la Rey at Kimberley, and was found guilty of being actively in arms, breaking parole and stealing 40 donkeys. Rautenbach and Jansen were hanged at Vryburg on 3 October 1901. Hermanus and Jurie, Kuhn were captured visiting their home at Zoutlief. Hermanus was found guilty of being in arms and the murder of a Louw. Jurie Kuhn was found guilty of being actively in arms and attempted murder. They were tried at Vryburg on 30 September and hanged on 29 October.⁸²

The cases were an exception; in reality no matter how stringent the prison terms or how dire the executions, war did not stop in Griqualand West because they were embroiled in the conflict with the Western Transvaal forces led by the redoubtable Gen De la Rey. Only when the main belligerents, the republican forces and the SA Field Force, decided to end the conflict, would the rebel have relief; at this stage the rank and file had become cannon fodder despite any protestations to the contrary.

⁷⁹ CAR, AG 2117, Special Court under the Indemnity and Special Tribunals Act.

⁸⁰ CAR, Cd 981, Section 18, Death penalties inflicted p145; *Somerset Budget*, 25 October 1901.

⁸¹ Bottomley, 'Anglo-Boer War reminiscences of LJ Groenewald', p6.

⁸² CAR, Cd 981, Section 18, Death penalties inflicted p128; Jordaan, *Só Het hulle Gesterf*, p16.

By December 1901 the majority of the rebel groups had retreated to the Northwest Cape. Many of the best Boer fighters were killed, captured or had retreated over the Orange River. After November 1901 the Courts handed down milder sentences, and about 100 rebels received one-year prison terms, indicating that a steady number of rebels were surrendering.⁸³ Then Frans du Randt of Adelaide, captured on 7 March 1902, was executed in Cradock on 5 April 1902. He had been a straggler in the Cradock Mountains for some months and was found guilty of being actively in arms, marauding and attempted murder. It is unclear why the courts handed down the death sentence so late on in the war.⁸⁴

Although Cmdt Gideon Scheepers, a member of the *Vrystaatse Artillerie*, was charged, tried and convicted by a military court in Graaff-Reinet, he was not a rebel, but a burgher who had lost his immunity to prosecution. His ill-fated military career, his leadership and whether he should have stood trial as he had surrendered due to illness, make his a celebrated case. He had surrendered to the British at Kopjeskraal, Prince Albert on 11 October 1901. He was charged with 30 counts, including seven of murder and one of attempted murder, and was found guilty on 29 charges, as he was acquitted on one of the murder charges. He was executed by firing squad on 18 January 1902 at Graaff-Reinet. A week earlier his lieutenant, Izak Liebenberg, had been hanged in the Aliwal North Gaol for the murder of a member of the Orange River Colony Police, who had surrendered.⁸⁵

The news of the double executions had a marked effect on the remnant of his commando, particularly the Free Staters under Cmdt Schalk Pypers. They had been regrouped by Gen Smuts under Gen Wynand Malan early in January 1902, and had been ordered to cross the railway line and return to the Midlands. However after the double executions, Pypers, Van Reenen, Christoffel Botha and Johannes Smith were not keen to follow Malan who returned to the Midlands on 21 February 1902. They then worked their way north of the blockhouse line that ran east from Lamberts Bay, and eventually laid down arms at Hopetown. One can speculate that understandably that these men had no intention of returning to the Midlands in 1902 as they feared the Martial Law Court of Graaff-Reinet following the lengthy court cases of their officers and comrades who were then put before a firing squad. The news of the number of witnesses who had been assembled to give evidence against Scheepers had spread. Many erstwhile members of his commando could have been suspicious that there was detailed intelligence against them in the files as well.⁸⁶

When this researcher talked to senior members of the Fraserburg and Beaufort West communities about the youngsters that had been executed and those that had been captured and made prisoners-of-war,

⁸³ CAR, Cd 1364, Royal Commission for the Revision of Martial Law Sentences.

⁸⁴ CAR, Cd 981, Section 18, Death penalties inflicted, p78; Jordaan, *Só Het hulle Gesterf*, p32.

⁸⁵ Shearing, *Commandant Gideon Scheepers and the Search for his Grave*, pp149-171. Despite a lengthy search the exact site of the remains of Scheepers, reburied after he was executed, continues to be a mystery.

the universal response was one of sympathy for those concerned, but their remarks were tempered by the memories that had come down from their own families; that the war, and in this case the rebellion, had turned out to be a very risky business, and when the men came home they were only too thankful to be alive and to have escaped a lengthy prison sentence or worse.

Ockert Gebrand van Schalkwyk of Gansfontein, Fraserburg told this researcher that he too wanted to join his family in the *veld* in the Fraserburg Commando in 1902, and was looking for a horse. His uncles got wind of his plans and arrived at their farm one night, and to his amazement he got a thrashing and they told him flatly that he was not going to ride with them. Watching the scene silently was one of his cousins. As his uncles rode out of the *werf*, his cousin muttered to him, "Okkie, can't you see for yourself that this road is endless?"⁸⁷

⁸⁶ Shearing, *General Jan Smuts and his Long Ride*, pp 178-179.

⁸⁷ Pers com, Ockert Gebrandt van Schalkwyk, Gansfontein, Fraserburg, 1978.

CHAPTER 5

THE CAPE REBEL ON COMMANDO

Why did they rebel?

Why did groups of Cape colonists rise in rebellion? Was it for friends and family? Were they just ambitious? Or did they expect a better life under the Free State Government? Was it because the so-called Bond Government had deserted the voters in the border districts? Did the rebels really believe the Free Staters that they would send them to Delagoa Bay if they did not join their commandos? Did some of the colonists imagine war was easy; or were they caught up in a vision of sweeping down to Cape Town and raising the republican flags over the Castle?

Why then, at that decisive moment, after their great victory, so easily won at Stormberg, did the rebels waver, and why did quarrels break out with the Free Staters? Why did the colonists never really rise in rebellion in great numbers or stay in the field for any length of time? Why did they tend to hang back behind the republican forces, and why, when rebel leaders such as Lötter and Myburgh had opportunities, did they employ tactics that courted defeat?

There are so many unanswered questions about these colonists and the rebellion. The problem is that the rebels were hardly conscious of their place in history like the defenders of Mafeking, and daily diaries have not been found. The sources used in this study are taken from official statements made after their capture or surrender. The few rebel memoirs or biographies were almost all written 30 or 40 years later, when the motive for rebellion was universally described as sympathy for the Afrikaner Nation or pity for the women and children in the camps, and nobody has admitted to political ambition.

In order to produce at least a contemporary profile, voters' rolls from Mafeking, Vryburg, Aliwal North (plus Lady Grey and New England) and Colesberg have been examined to identify some group behaviour and weigh it up against information collected on the rebels.

In Griqualand West and Bechuanaland, the attrition suffered by the rural population in the aftermath of the rinderpest pandemic, was probably the major cause of rebellion north of the Orange River. W Blenkins, a commissioner sent by the Cape Government to investigate the region, reported the most appalling poverty and economic stagnation in Douglas and Campbell in April 1899. With hardly any coins in circulation, he reported that even the canteens were deserted. In most of the Herbert and Hay

districts very few cattle were seen grazing; instead the locusts swarmed on the *veld*. Anthrax and horse sickness were prevalent at Danielskuil. Transport to the diamond mines of Kimberley had broken down at Barkly West; the wagon drivers and the woodchoppers could not move their loads because the cost of spans of oxen was prohibitive. In Vryburg and in Mafeking Blenkins said, the poor were reduced to a state of unrelieved want, and he suspected some of the blacks had died of starvation, and others were near to it. He estimated that there were now several thousand colonists in Griqualand West and Bechuanaland squatting in tents or living in huts made of mealie stalks covered with clay.¹ Many well-off landowners, who had become poor whites, angrily blamed officials of the Colonial Government for making matters worse because they had kept the district in quarantine from October 1896 until May 1898.²

Once war broke out, a glance at the Mafeking voters' roll shows which were rebels and which loyalists. De la Rey was right when he warned Cronje to avoid the place. Even without Baden-Powell and the Protectorate Regiment, the officers and men of the British South Africa Police, Cape Police and the large railway contingent stationed there would have put up a hard fight against the Boer forces.³ Out of 661 voters in the fiscal division of Mafeking only eleven became rebels, while another ten men in the town were taken into protective custody. Probably this was due to fear of or respect for Baden-Powell's reputation. In the Rietfontein area of Mafeking there were an additional 38 rebels on the Vryburg voters' roll, giving a total of 139 rebels (49 voters and 90 non-voters).⁴ Once the siege was lifted those that had not fled were arrested and gaoled, leaving the women behind to start the first civilian camp at Mafeking.

Further south the general poverty of Vryburg farmers points to economic factors and not to Afrikaner Nationalism as such, as the driving force behind rebellion. The decisive factor in their decision to join the Boer forces lay in their expectations that mortgages would be remitted by the Transvalers after victory.⁵ Consequently Vryburg's 674 rebels were more rebellious than those at Mafeking. With them were 301 non-voting rebels. Looking at 1384 voters on the Vryburg Voters' Roll it is noticeable that it is the sons or brothers of the 136 rebel landowners (men with the same surname as that of the landowner and living at the same address) that went into rebellion, more than the *bywoner* (defined for this study as a voter, and described as a farmer/agriculturalist who had the same address as the landowner but a different surname). As could be expected nineteen out of twenty carriers or transport drivers on the roll, ruined by

¹ CAR, CCP 1/2/1/110, Report on Agricultural Distress in Griqualand West and Mafeking by WG Blenkins, 1 April 1899.

² Cape of Good Hope, *Government Gazette*, No 610, 1898. Release from quarantine notice.

³ CAR, CCP 1/1/39, *List of persons registered in the electoral division of Mafeking for 1899*; Scholtz, *Waarom die Boere die Oorlog Verloor Het*, p57; *Mafeking Mail*, 30 November 1899, 'Summary Court of Justice'.

⁴ CAR, AG 3500, *List of persons registered in Ward 4 of Mafeking for 1899*; AG 2106, Returns of rebels for June 1903.

⁵ *Conference of Loyalists, held at The Paarl on August 29 and 30, 1902*, p56. This topic has been discussed in Chapter 1, 'Rebellion in Bechuanaland'.

the rinderpest, became rebels. Out of a contingent of 81, nine Cape Policemen rebelled.⁶ The remainder defended the post at Kuruman for six weeks until New Year 1900 and after the surrender of the Post they were sent to Pretoria as prisoners-of-war. They returned to duty to fight rebellion in the Vryburg district in 1901/1902.

In contrast to the grinding poverty north of the Orange River, the rinderpest pandemic had not been as devastating south of the river, and the leading lights behind the rebellion in the Stormberg and Colesberg regions were reasonably prosperous. Many of the Class 1 rebels were leaders in their districts, and the well-known Jan de Wet of Moseshford, Barkly East belonged to the same huge clan as Gen CR de Wet. At Dordrecht the leader was the ambitious young lawyer, Octavius Vermooten.

It is the leaders from Barkly East who, more than any other group, create the impression that they were dominant Victorians, well aware of their rights. They had lost patience with the Schreiner Ministry and were sure the English did not have a chance.⁷ In common with other northeastern districts, rebellion was fuelled in the Aliwal North, Lady Grey and New England wards of Barkly East by anger because they were not supported by the Cape Government. Immigrants from the Free State into Barkly East district played a leading role in rebellion; the canvassing for the republic's forces by former Colonial Magistrate G Munnik, who returned to Barkly East with Olivier, was also given as an additional reason by colonists who rebelled. Hercules Botha of Mostyn said he was commandeered and he submitted; and anyway his old Magistrate said they all had to join.⁸

In the fiscal division of Aliwal North 648 voters from a total of 1140 voters appear on the magistrate's rebel list, plus the names of 570 non-voters plus eighteen others whose status is unknown. As 435 out of 1236 names do not appear on any other list, it can be speculated that the magistrate listed even those he suspected of rebellion.⁹ If the list is taken on face value 68.6% or 127 landowners went into rebellion, which indicates a considerable degree of confidence in the Free Staters that they would be victorious, and that they would not be in danger of losing their farms.¹⁰

There was simply not the same level of support for rebellion in the Colesberg district if compared to the Stormberg region; less than a third of the voters joined, despite the presence of the republican forces in the district. Among the reasons were the railway men were markedly loyal, and only 1% of 233 voters among the railway employees rebelled. The Boer forces also did not commandeer in Murray Ward (bordering the Middelburg district) that was predominantly English speaking. Although Nicholas Albertus van Rensburg of Rietvlei, a leading Class 1 rebel, came from Ward 4, he had less impact on his

⁶ CAR, AG 3500, *List of persons registered in the electoral division of Vryburg*; Shearing, 'The Rebel Record'.

⁷ Oosthuizen, *Rebelle van die Stormberge*, pp121-124.

⁸ CAR, AG 3395, Preliminary Investigation into Charges of High Treason, Hercules and Hermanus Botha of Mostyn, May 1900.

⁹ CAR, AG 2095, Those who have joined the enemy from the District of Aliwal North, nd.

¹⁰ Why the Aliwal North colonists rebelled has been discussed in Chapter 1 in 'Rebellion south of the Orange River'.

neighbours than would have been expected. Of 332 voters in Murray Ward 35 voters and twelve non-voters joined the republican forces.

In Colesberg Town (Ward 1) 20.9% rebelled out of the 206 on the voters' roll. In general, the shopkeepers and civil servants who were in the majority in most towns were usually loyalists. However in Colesberg the Class 1 rebels included Petrus Pienaar, a speculator who doubled as sexton, Ignatius J van der Walt the MLA for Colesberg, Pieter Botha, the Magistrate's Clerk, Barend Roux, a harness maker and Barend Swart, a shopkeeper. They probably all attended meetings in Nicholas van Rensburg's town house on 6 October 1899, where they made anti-government speeches and agreed to arm themselves with two guns each so that if the government disarmed them they would retain a gun a-piece.¹¹

From the Lower Hantam (Ward 2) came six Class 1 rebels including the leader, Hendrik Lategan, and his brother Roelf, both from Driefontein, and Willem Hofmeyr Louw of Achterlang. Lategan was later said to have rebelled because his sympathies lay with the Boer Republics, which was the usual motivation.¹² There was widespread admiration for President Steyn among the Dutch, and his family recalled V/C Jan van Zijl of Ebenhauser, a non-voter of Ward 3, Upper Hantam, as an ardent 'Steynman'.¹³ The greatest recruitment of rebels took place in wards bordering the Orange Free State: in the Upper Sea Cow (Ward 5), where 41 voters and non-voters joined, and Lower Sea Cow (Ward 6), where 113 voters and non-voters joined.¹⁴ As they were friends and neighbours of the Free Staters on the other side of the Orange River, it is not surprising that recruitment in these wards was high.

In early 1901 during the second invasion, the quasi commandeering of Cape colonists by the Free State forces became a thing of the past, and rebels were recruited individually and urged to join the Afrikaner in the fight against the English, or to partake in a great adventure. Kritzinger's Commando told would-be recruits they had come to the Cape Colony as their wives and children were safe in the camps. They were going to see the sea, meet their cousins in the colony and make the *Rooineks* desperate.¹⁵ They aimed to create turmoil throughout the Colony and not be captured in the process. The element of daring is reflected in the cartoons of Queen Victoria with the words 'Catch me' scrawled in a book by the young rebels at Featherstonehaugh, burnt down by Scheepers and Van der Merwe on 5 August 1901.¹⁶ The spirit of bravado and adventure that led many a young rebel to join the Boer forces was in later years reinterpreted as patriotism for the Afrikaner cause.

Camus defined rebellion as "a fruitless struggle with facts, an obscure protest which involves neither method nor reasons." This is probably a fair description of the colonial rebellion during the South

¹¹ CAR, AG 2062, folio 389, miscellaneous information 1899-1904.

¹² Kruger (ed), *The Dictionary of South African Biography*, III, pp498-99.

¹³ Pers com, JP van Zijl of Oudtshoorn, grandson of Hendricus Ignatius (or Jan) van Zyl.

¹⁴ Shearing, 'The Rebel Record'.

¹⁵ *Beaufort Courier*, reprinted from *Uitenhage Times*, 23 February 1901, 'In Kritzinger's hands'.

¹⁶ Shearing, *Commandant Gideon Scheepers and the Search for his Grave*, p111.

African War.¹⁷ Colonial rebellion was obviously intertwined with the military fortunes of the republican forces; still neither in the first nor the second rebellion did the rebels demonstrate that persistence, that solid core of unyielding resistance which epitomized a true revolt akin to that which culminated in the first democratic elections in South Africa in 1994.

Commissariat

The South African War was not different to any other war, and here the ancient military axiom that an army will be defeated if its soldiers do not eat once each day certainly applied - as it did everywhere else.

It was their basic attitude to their food supply that undid the Boers. The hallowed tradition that a Boer went on commando and took food for eight days meant a fast-moving body of men were not lumbered by supply wagons. The Boers then supplemented their food with game and *veldkos*; this rough and ready system worked well for small bodies of men prior to the rinderpest. Then the South African War broke out on the heels of the pandemic, and for the first time the Boer forces moved larger bodies of men than ever before. The Boers laid siege to Mafeking and Kimberley, and waited for the British army along the Modder River, in an area where either the game had been decimated by rinderpest or hunted out by diamond prospectors. The borders closed and the commercial supply chain to the country stores ground to a halt as tinned food and condensed milk and other imported goods became a thing of the past.

The food supply for the Boers from the Free State was not properly organised from the beginning and few Boers had any idea of just how much would be needed by the commissariat on a daily basis. Frank Hill, a lawyer, wrote to his wife that when the Kroonstad Commando reached the outskirts of Ladysmith, the men wrote home saying they were having a rough time of it. They got no food; just mealie meal porridge mixed with water, no sugar, no salt. Ten local deserters who appeared before the Kroonstad Magistrate at the end of November 1899 said they returned home because there was no food at the front.¹⁸

The situation for the Boers at Mafeking was better than at Kroonstad, but the economy of Mafeking revolved around the stores and warehouses in the town, and until the Boer forces captured them, these supplies remained out of reach. By the end of the first month of the siege, the Boer forces were complaining bitterly of living on rusks, coffee and half-cooked, roasted meat.¹⁹ While convoys of wagons did bring supplies from the Transvaal, it was never sufficient, and the rebels soon looted all the country

¹⁷ Camus, *The Rebel*, pp77-78.

¹⁸ Hill, long letter from Kroonstad to his wife at Wellington, 22 October 1899 to 20 May 1900, Private Archives of Mrs J Muller of Rondebosch, Cape Town.

¹⁹ Smit and Maré, *Die Beleg van Mafeking*, p83.

stores for the commandos. Gen Snyman sent them out to round up cattle and small stock for the laager.²⁰ As the months passed supplying meat to the 1500 Boers investing Mafeking, in a region decimated by rinderpest, put an almost impossible strain on all races in Bechuanaland.

After the Free Staters annexed Griqualand West in November 1899 the *Veld Cornets* in the Herbert district were instructed to commandeer supplies for the Boers locally. They operated out of the main laagers at Zulani and Sunnyside near Douglas, and from smaller laagers at Clearwater and Olierivier, as they knew which areas had cattle, sheep and goats, wagons and carts. William Meyer, a former Magistrate's Clerk, took charge of Williams and Cummings shop at Douglas, where looted goods were stored before being rerouted to the laagers.²¹ Louis Jacobus van Zyl, acting Commissariat Officer, distributed food to the families of rebels and handed over the contents of forcibly commandeered shops in Griquatown to the Boer forces.²² Although supplies for commandos came in via Jacobsdal and Bloemfontein, many Boers organized provisions from home as food was usually in short supply.²³

At Vryburg and Taung, under Boer control until May 1900, commandeering of food and supplies was widespread and loyalist shops were stripped bare within a short time. Five local shops submitted accounts of nearly £400 to the *Krygscommisaris* in Pretoria, indicating that during the first invasion in 1899 the rebellion received financial support from the Republican Governments. Accounts for supplying oxen, horses and sheep sent in between March and May 1900 by local rebels Gert Rautenbach, R, J and WJ Peens and Hermanus Kuhn, amounted to £108. This indicates that local rebels profited by the investment by republican forces.²⁴ Whether they were paid out before Gen Hunter's Column recaptured the village on 10 May is another matter.²⁵

In the Stormberg region widespread commandeering from local farmers and shops in the occupied Stormberg region kept the laagers supplied until the last few weeks, when according to newspaper reports the Boer forces at Stormberg Junction began to run short and lived on meat and mealies.²⁶ In February/March 1900, when the conventional war ended, stockpiles of stores were abandoned in Natal, around Kimberley and along the Modder River. The stores removed from the Colesberg region could not replace that which was lost. From February 1900, after the British forces entered the Free State and later

²⁰ CAR, AG 2038, Folio 20, Preliminary Investigation, 27 October 1900.

²¹ CAR, AG 2062, Correspondence Anglo-Boer War and High Treason, Miscellaneous, Folio 389, Preliminary Investigation into Class 1 Rebels, 21 November 1900.

²² CAR, AG 3407, Indictment against LJ van Zyl of Griquatown.

²³ CAR, AG 2029, Correspondence Anglo-Boer War and High Treason, Herbert 1900-1902, Folio 11, Case 145, 29 March, 1901.

²⁴ CAR, AG 2049, Folio 36, Accounts submitted to Cmdt Visser and later sent to the Attorney General by Maj W Nagot.

²⁵ *Cape Times Weekly Edition*, 27 May 1900, 'Warrenton'.

²⁶ *Grocott's Daily Mail Weekly War Summary*, 19 February 1900, 'Stormberg'.

the Transvaal, the rebels fought for their food on an almost daily basis; increasingly military tactics were dictated by the need for forays on British convoys to supply the Boer commissariat.

In December 1900 when Free State commandos under Kritzinger and Hertzog crossed the Orange River they caught the Colonial Government by surprise as the borders were not well guarded, and trying to reach the sea the Free Staters stopped and enjoyed the summer harvest in the Oudtshoorn district. The report of a war council held at Wilgerrivier, Uniondale on 20 January 1901 stated that they had punished two burghers (reason unknown) and had eaten enough grapes and now had plenty of horses.²⁷ Under Martial Law extra food supplies soon disappeared, controls were introduced and rationing became strict. However, when Kritzinger returned to the Cape Colony in May 1901 with the rebels under Lötter and Van Reenen, who had fled over the Orange in April, the 500 men were almost starving. They stormed down on the Strettons at Buffelsfontein in the Molteno district, looted the farmhouse, and washed down the few raisins, sugar, pickles and sardines they could find with ginger beer. After the local troops were defeated at Jamestown, the control over the rebel forces broke down and the shops were looted.²⁸

Food for large numbers of men became increasingly scarce, and without sufficient regular food to sustain them all, rebels lived mainly on meat. The commandos pushed out to the Gordonia, Kenhardt and Namaqualand districts where they grew wheat along the rivers and vegetables were planted, particularly pumpkins and sweet potatoes. By the end of September Col JT White had cleared Bushmanland of stock, horses and supplies to prevent that huge area being used as a rebel base. These large-scale drives by the British columns resulted in families fleeing in August with all their stock into German South West Africa.²⁹ Food remained a scarce commodity; the commandos lived on meat, ostrich eggs and tortoises. They learnt the old trick of riding with a joint of meat hanging from the saddle so that it could absorb a little salt from the sweat of their horses.³⁰

Consequently capturing armed convoys at a price in order to satisfy their own needs became a priority of the Boers towards the end of the war. They were no longer able to fight to win the war, but fought to feed themselves.³¹

Izak Jacobus Vorster of Lategan's Commando, who had escaped from Bothaville on his horse Walton, insisted, according to his grandson, W Crouse of Richmond, that most of the fine stories of riding with the rebels were just legends. By May 1902 they were so hungry that they ate dogs in the Murraysburg district, he said. First they starved them and after they were slaughtered they washed the intestines, stuffed the meat into the skins and made sausages. At the time he was only too thankful to curl up and sleep on a

²⁷ Shearing, *Commandant Gideon Scheepers and the Search for his Grave*, p50.

²⁸ Shearing, *The Brave Boer Boy and Other Stories*, p58.

²⁹ CAR, PMO 80, Folio 332 Magistrate of Springbokfontein to Law Department, 2 August 1901; NAR, FK 812, Report of Col White re operations in Bushmanland, 10 September 1901.

³⁰ Pers com, G Nieuwoudt, Garries, 1981, and Mrs Cornelissen, Upington, 1979.

³¹ War Office, *A Manual of Military Law*, p242, 'The means of carrying on war'.

full stomach, but after the war he kept seeing and hearing the dogs. They stayed in his mind, he decided, so that he would not forget that war drove you to do things you could not have imagined the day you took your horse and went to fight, Vorster told his grandson.³²

Clothing and equipment

During the first invasion war was a grand opportunity to acquire new clothes through commandeering. By the end of 1900 the shops in the rebel held areas had all suffered heavy losses and some were stripped bare. Due to the hard life in the saddle the men's clothes were often in tatters. When Kritzinger's commandos invaded the Cape Colony in December 1900, they avoided the northern districts under Martial Law and rode along the mountain ranges, planning to invade the Midlands as they were looking for clothing and boots.

Fouché and Scheepers, who had been thwarted by the arrival of troop trains that reached Middelburg and Graaff-Reinet, raced into Aberdeen on 16 January 1901, and Scheepers entered Uniondale a few days later.³³ The shops were cleared in an orderly fashion as the Veld Cornets commandeered clothes, hats and boots from an 'order list' so that the whole commando was satisfied, and hats and boots fitted. When Hertzog's Commando reached Calvinia in January 1901 the local tailors had to make officers new suits, and Mrs Nightingale at Middelpost was ordered to repair the shirts belonging to men in George Brand's Commando even after the men had taken all the new clothes in her shop.³⁴

Once the villages were garrisoned and out of bounds for the rebels, they cleared out country stores. Among the stores the Western Province Mounted Rifles kept under surveillance was a Jewish store at Middelkraal on the road to Brandvlei, and the Boers paid a high price for the clothes they got there. When Manie Maritz sent Robert de Kersauson de Pennendreff and a Hollander, Cornelius Steurwald to get clothes and shoes on 10 June 1901, they were cornered and the Western Province Mounted Rifles wounded Steurwald. De Kersauson asked a young rebel, Petrus Steenkamp of Calvinia, to find Maritz and he got away even though his horse was shot out from under him. Maritz appeared with a small force in due course and two troopers were killed in the shootout that followed. Nel, a young recruit was also killed; Steurwald died of wounds and another young rebel was wounded.³⁵

The wearing of British khaki uniforms by the Boer forces was forbidden under Martial Law, and became a contentious issue as many Boers and rebels wore it out of necessity, taking the clothes from the

³² Pers com, Mr Willem Crouse snr, of Richmond, whose grandfather warned him that most of the grand stories of the Boer War were actually legends and far from the truth.

³³ *Beaufort Courier*, 30 January 1901.

³⁴ Shearing, *The Brave Boer Boy and Other Stories*, 'Middelpost', p106.

³⁵ Maritz, *My Lewe en Strewe*, p38; NAR, FK 805, Hely-Hutchinson to Chamberlain, 11 June 1901.

troopers as they were captured. During the bitter winter of 1901 the rebels of the Stormberg, many youngsters between 18 and 30 years, were in rags because of the hard life on the veld.³⁶ Smith from Aberdeen said that eventually he saw captured soldiers undressing even before the order had been given. The trooper was issued with two types of boots, and the rebels became quite choosy and most indignant if the soldier was wearing the 'newies' they did not like, and would tell the soldiers to complain to the Queen that the 'newies' were no good.³⁷ When Hendrik Lategan surprised a troop of Cape Mounted Riflemen at Popkloof in the Middelburg district in May 1901 and took their horses, they described the rebels as half-starved and in a wretched condition. There were reports that the farmers were forced to hide all their clothing and the rebels wore women's stockings as protection against the bitter cold.³⁸

The widespread use of khaki uniform by rebels came to an abrupt end in September 1901 after the Smuts Commando overran the 17th Lancers in the Tarkastad district. The army put out a report saying that the success of the attack was due to the confusion caused by the Boers being mistaken for Gorrings' Column, whose arrival was expected, as they were wearing khaki uniform. The British said that the Boers were wearing khaki in order to deceive them and Kitchener gave orders that Boers captured in khaki uniform were to be tried by drumhead Court Martial, and, if found guilty, were to be executed immediately by firing squad.³⁹ After the execution of Piet de Ruyt, captured near Adelaide wearing khaki, Harold Glasse, a scout in Gorrings' Column, said that when his unit captured Boers in khaki that did not know about the proclamation, they warned them to discard the uniform before handing them over to the authorities.⁴⁰

When Jack Baxter of the Smuts Commando was executed near Aberdeen by Col Harry Scobell after he was captured wearing khaki, the Transvalers and the rebels got rid of the uniform, while others removed the insignia and dyed the jacket in *swartebas*, or sewed a black collar on the jacket.⁴¹ Even in 1902 rebels were still seen in khaki uniform, but with the insignia stripped off. Alwijn Burger of Leeufontein, Sutherland told his younger sister that it was the ultimate horror of the war to be forced to wear the clothes of a man, young and in the prime of life, after he had just shot and killed him.⁴²

³⁶ NAR, FK 804; *Frontier Guardian*, 7 June 1901.

³⁷ Smith, *Ek Rebelleer*, pp28-29.

³⁸ *Graaff-Reinet Advertiser*, 31 May 1901, 'Lategan attacked CMR'.

³⁹ *Grocott's Penny Mail*, 30 September 1901.

⁴⁰ Walter Glasse, letter to Col Denys Reitz, March 1932, private archives of Mrs Robyn Thomson, Knysna.

⁴¹ Lt-Col FF Colvin and Capt ER Gordon, *Diary of the 9th (QR) Lancers During the South African Campaign 1899-1902*, p250; *Swartebas (Diospyros lycioides)*; David Shearing, *Karoo: Wild Flower Guide* 6, p110; Pers com, AM Pienaar, Wilgerboskloof, Beaufort West.

⁴² Pers com by his daughter, Mrs Burger of Fraserburg, 1989.

Arms and ammunition

In 1899 the Vryburg and Kuruman rebels, who had joined the Transvaal commandos, were issued with Mauser rifles stamped ZAR and carrying serial numbers, plus 100 rounds of ammunition. The Martini-Henry rifle, handed out mainly by the OFS Government, was less popular because it smoked when fired. Thousands of these rifles were surrendered to the military between March and June 1900, when the majority of the rebels of the first invasion laid down arms. Those that rejoined in 1901, as well as the new recruits, had to capture weapons under arms. Because of the Disarmament Act many recruits arrived unarmed, while a few bold ones joining the commandos had not handed their weapons in. Of the 50 recruits who joined Lötter at Wolwevlei, Cradock thirteen arrived armed; Marthinus van Heerden had a muzzleloader.⁴³

When Manie Maritz held his first weapon inspection at Brandvlei at the end of April 1901, his men could only muster a few Lee-Metfords and Martini-Henrys, and a collection of old muzzleloaders; some men were down to ten bullets.⁴⁴ The arming of recruits remained a chronic problem. Despite these shortages in the beginning of 1901, the commandos made little effort to carry additional rifles if they happened to capture them, because they were mounted and travelled light. When Scheepers' Commando captured 40 men from the PAG near Sheldon Station on 30 December 1900, they handed out some captured rifles to the new recruits and smashed the rest.⁴⁵

Firearms are precision instruments, and by March 1901 many rifles from the beginning of the war were worn out. An Imperial Yeomanry soldier, who had escaped from Scheepers' laager near Aberdeen in March 1901, later discovered a pile of discarded rifles at the place where his patrol had been captured. They were mostly damaged Lee-Metfields, with the woodwork cut away to make them lighter; many had been roughly repaired with wire. He also found a rifle in excellent condition and a bandolier forgotten next to a tree that he took as booty.⁴⁶

By June 1901 the commandos under Kritzinger had virtually run out of ammunition. When wagonloads of rifles and ammunition were captured in June at Jamestown it failed to usher in a new era because the rebels had no discipline. Many of the youngsters were after excitement and violence, and the officers had very little control over them; they got drunk instead, with the result that most of the

⁴³ Marthinus van Heerden of Conway's story on tape, property of Mrs K Steyn of Port Elizabeth; *Grocott's Penny Mail*, 26 February 1901. 'Zirk Lötter was recognised by a fellow Old Andean'.

⁴⁴ De Kersaun, *Ek en die Vierkleur*, p66.

⁴⁵ Shearing, *Commandant Gideon Scheepers and the Search for his Grave*, p36.

⁴⁶ Gilbert, *Rhodesia and After*, p179.

ammunition was recaptured by Gorringer's Column. A few days later when Kritzinger was surprised at Wildefontein, Scobell reclaimed 25 rifles and 12,000 rounds of ammunition.⁴⁷

Within weeks of the fracas at Jamestown ammunition was again so short that Lötter's Commando was forced to wrap brown paper around their .303 bullets before stuffing them into old Martini-Henry cartridge cases to make them fit, and then loaded them into Martini-Henry rifles. Eight men in the Midland Mounted Regiment were killed in the Waterkloof near Cradock, and a further six died of wounds. The casualty rate was so high because the wounds were large, and something in the pieces of paper made them septic.⁴⁸ Each rebel had to supply his own ammunition, so he hoarded his supply of arms and ammunition jealously. The chronic shortages had a considerable influence on the tactics the rebels used. They were far more likely to use stealth, surprise and hit and run tactics, and tended to break off contact and not maintain an attack. In June 1902 after the Peace at Vereeniging, 3,569 rebels surrendered. Only at Hopetown when Smith's, Pypers' and Van Reenen's Commandos laid down arms is the exact number of ordnance listed. While most of the men handed in rifles, there was a big discrepancy in the numbers of bullets. Some men handed in hundreds, while others' bandoleers were empty.⁴⁹

Horses

Like their Boer counterparts in the republics, the colonists were excellent horsemen who normally saved their mounts by riding in the dawn and the dusk and resting during the heat of the day. They alternated horses on a long journey; riding with one on a leading rein. They halted every fifteen miles (24 kms) and loosened the girth, allowing the horses to roll once on a day's journey. They also varied the gait, walking and trotting. Colonists also dismounted and led their horses on long stretches and up inclines. When the frost was late animals were moved to proclaimed *perdeberge* where they would run safe from the midge that carried horse sickness.⁵⁰ All these safeguards eroded in wartime.

There are many legendary stories of colonial horses, including the tale of the chestnut stallion with the hard hooves that had never been shod. Its owner, Mias Hendriks of Katkop, Brandvlei, gave it to a young Graaf or Greef of Moorreesburg, who arrived on his farm on a wornout horse on his way to fight for the Boers in 1899. Hendriks said the rebel fought right through the war and, on his way home in 1902,

⁴⁷ *Somerset Budget*, 9 June 1901; Williams, *Record of the Cape Mounted Riflemen*, p104.

⁴⁸ South African Field Forces Casualty List, Section 4, p99; Midland News, 20 June 1901; Shearing, *Commandant Johannes Lötter and his Rebels*, p18.

⁴⁹ CAR, AG 2116, Act 100 of 1902, Rebels laid down arms under this act; CAR, AG 2062 Part 2, Miscellaneous correspondence Anglo-Boer War 1899-1904.

⁵⁰ Pers com, AG Bezuidenhout, Brandewynsgat, Beaufort West was a mine of information on how farmers maintained their horses, 1982.

returned it to him in first-rate condition.⁵¹ Better documented was the story of the old gelding bred in the Colesberg district from a Flemish stallion out of an Arabian Boer mare that Marthinis Havinga trained on commando. He remembered when they stormed the British position at Bastardsnek on the road to Petrusville he let Walton have his head as he charged in with the others. Havinga first surrendered to the British at Philippolis towards the end of March 1900, but changed his mind and slipped away on Walton a week later. He rejoined Lategan at Komatiepoort, and later accompanied President Steyn, after his meeting with President Kruger, on his return to the Orange Free State. Walton was one of the few Cape horses that survived the journey, as most of them died from horse sickness. It was Havinga who became ill near Klerksdorp; so he gave Walton to a cousin, Izak Vorster. He raced out under fire when Lategan's men were surprised at Bothaville in early November 1900, carried to freedom by Walton. Unfortunately this gallant horse became trapped in a morass, probably Duraan's Vlei near Houtkraal, and drowned in February 1901 during the De Wet invasion.⁵²

Daan Scheepers said they went on commando in March 1901 riding the local farmers' best 'courting' horses they had stolen from their hiding places where they had been running out sight of the remount officers' eagle eyes.⁵³ That year the frost was late and the dreaded horse sickness struck at the end of April. It first appeared among the Imperial Yeomanry units in Graaff-Reinet.⁵⁴ The Boer horses suffered terribly. Newspaper reports appeared saying that hundreds were lying dead from Burghersdorp all the way to the Orange River. The stench was quite appalling, the papers said.⁵⁵ Horse sickness that year was widespread. When Caspar Hendrik Groenewald led a party of Vryburg rebels back from Machadadorp in about October 1900 all the horses bar one died of horse sickness in the Magaliesberg, and they had to walk the rest of the way.⁵⁶

In the Cape Colony horses, once so plentiful, vanished, driven into protection camps, worn out from exhaustion, dead from 'blue tongue', shot or maimed. The Boers now nursed broken down mounts and broke in wild horses while on the trek. When the rebel was down to a single mount, he lost the advantage, and could not dictate the pace. Boers on commando were also forced to ride carthorses that were unpredictable and difficult to mount. When they did raid a remount camp, said Du Plessis, after the horse sickness abated they frequently found the horses too weak to ride.⁵⁷ The search for remounts often became the reason for an attack on colonial forces, and the rebels could pay a high price trying to replace this valuable resource. When Kritzingen returned to the Midlands in the middle of June their fodder had

⁵¹ Nel, *Die Kaapse Rebelle van die Hantam-Karoo*, p129.

⁵² FAR, Renier Collection, 119.140 Folio 8724, letter from Martins Havinga, Vaalbank Street, George, nd.

⁵³ *Somerset Budget*, 'Memoirs of D du P Scheepers', 26 May 1962

⁵⁴ Shute's diary, 27 April 1901.

⁵⁵ CAR, D/D 1/72, Folio 2515, report by Major C Wooller.

⁵⁶ 'Anglo-Boer War reminiscences of LJ Groenewald', p3.

⁵⁷ Du Plessis, *Oomblikke van Spanning*, p44.

vanished as all the oats, hay and lucern had been taken into the villages or burnt. This lack of fodder and food forced him to split his commando and hard times were ahead for both men and horses.⁵⁸

In August 1901, Piet van der Merwe's men were fortunate to pick up 200 horses and fodder, principally from the Taute Scouts of George, running in the Langkloof. The Scouts had starved their animals so that the remount officers turned them down. Once the buyers had left they were fed up again and were in good condition and perfect for the Boers. The result of this scheming was that the District Mounted Troops, who were allowed extra horses on special permits, remounted the Boer forces when the commandos raced up through the Southern Cape in August 1901.⁵⁹

Towards the end of the year the rebel forces seldom found a fresh horse in the Eastern Cape. In December 1901 Du Plessis described the terror of seeing his only horse, *Vrydom*, fail. Pursuit was so close he would have been captured if mist had not risen and saved him. A few days before the worn-out animal took a fall, but Du Plessis was blind to the quivering flanks and the dull coat and eyes of his once fleet-footed Arab. He was forced to abandon his horse in December when it collapsed during a fight in Molteno.⁶⁰ Horses were always better targets than people as they were larger and easier to hit, and once a rebel was on foot he was that much easier to capture.

In early November 1901 the Cape Colony was divided into two divisions, with the newly raised Cape Colonial Forces doing policing duties. Col H Lukin, in command of the Eastern Division, moved his men into a series of small camps along bridal paths, river crossings and tracks used by the Boers.⁶¹ Using boundary fences as a starting point, the troops built driving kraals or *ramkampe* and trapped the fleeing rebels in them. By January 1902 Fouché, desperate for horses, asked Daan Scheepers to raid the remount camp of the Kaffrarian Rifles in Burghersdorp. On the outward journey they landed up in a driving kraal in the Molteno district. They were chased down the fence all day, said Scheepers, and in the evening light they saw a camp ahead and in the distance two others. They escaped by dismounting and slipping away on foot in the dusk and walking their horses for some distance; exhaustion forced them to rest after fifteen hours in the saddle.

They were followed and attacked at dawn in the vicinity of Koffiefontein in the Molteno district; a young Hattingh was killed and the Free Staters surrendered. It was a disaster, said Scheepers, as he had left Fouché with twelve men and 24 horses, and only five of them returned to the Boer camp with the horses they were riding, and they never even reached Burghersdorp.⁶² Col Scobell had said that the horse

⁵⁸ NAR, FK 800, Weekly Intelligence Report, 27 July 1901.

⁵⁹ NAR, FK 811, Confidential letter of Lieut E Crawley, Alexander's Column, 12 August 1901.

⁶⁰ Du Plessis, *Oomblikke van Spanning*, pp87 and 90.

⁶¹ Williams, *Record of the Cape Mounted Riflemen*, p111. The Cape Colonial forces replaced the Colonial Defence Force.

⁶² *Somerset Budget*, 'Memoirs of Cmdt D duP Scheepers', 1962. Scheepers was the only person who described the dangers of the driving kraals.

rather than the rifle was the principal factor in the war, which would probably continue until the horse supply failed. This was more and more evident in 1902.⁶³

By May 1902 spare horses were long gone, and discussions at Vereeniging were in full swing. However in the Camdeboo the remnants of the commandos remained outside the process. It was the need for fresh horses that drove Cmdt Carel van Heerden to raid his hometown Aberdeen. He had led the raid on the town a few weeks before, and Maj Shute of the Coldstream Guards had increased the sangars in the streets of Aberdeen, and talked courage into the local Town Guards, but they remained terrified of Van Heerden, a former saddle-maker in the village. On 18 May, Van Heerden led a raid and broke into three stables, and the youngsters ran the horses down the dark streets to the laager. Alerted by the noise, the Town Guard fired from the safety of their forts, but did not counter attack. Then the District Mounted Troops, alerted by the firing, raced into the village, and in the shoot-out that followed around the Dutch Reformed Church John Londt was fatally wounded, Pte A Pearson was killed and two men in the District Mounted Troops were wounded.

Reckless to the last Van Heerden called for volunteers to attack the guard post on top of the roof of the local Commandant's Office, and ran out of the Church grounds with five young rebels behind him. From the gun ports in the stables and from the roof of the Commandant's Office, the defenders returned fire. When the clip of Van Heerden's Mauser revolver was empty and he was only twenty yards from the Commandant's Office, he fired from the hip with his rifle. An explosion followed and Van Heerden collapsed, blood pumping everywhere, his guts spewing out. Death was almost instantaneous; his last strangled words were "Gaan julle, vlug julle".⁶⁴ His men fled.

What had happened? The usual explanation is that a bullet hit the rifle, driving the bolt into his femoral artery. John Hoffman, a rebel, later speculated that the chamber exploded because the barrel had become blocked with brick dust after Van Heerden had used it as a crowbar earlier. In the retreat Joseph Coetzee of Burghersdorp was mortally wounded and Louis Fourie was hit in the cheek, but the rest got away and reached Malan and Fouché 54 horses to the good, but their Commandant was dead and the commando was devastated.⁶⁵

War begins as an adventure

For Johnny Haarhof, originally from Graaff-Reinet and now working in Bloemfontein, going on commando was an adventure at first. He wrote to his landlady from the Langeberg in October 1899 saying

⁶³ *Northern Post*, 24 June 1901.

⁶⁴ Translation 'Go! Flee!'

⁶⁵ Smith, *Ek Rebelleer*, pp159-164; Du Plessis, *Oomblikke van Spanning*, pp157- 164; Pers com, Danie Hoffman, 1980.

"we have a very easy time of it; all we do is eat, sleep and drink." He explained to his brother Sydney in November that, "bombarding Kimberley is just child's play. Albrecht fired at 4,000 yards and the garrison fired back and that went on the whole day. We just sat on the kopje waiting for the English to show themselves, and it was very tiring." He later complained of endless patrols and being three days in the saddle with only meat to eat. It worried him that their orders were changed from one day to the next. Sometimes they were about to advance on Kimberley, and the next day it was quite the reverse, he said.

He mentioned the rampant theft of clothing, and said that after the battle of Modder River, "some of the Boers ran away, and President Steyn was very cross with them, while others danced madly and were jolly as some brass band instruments had been sent to the commandos." By the battle of Magersfontein the grim realities of war became commonplace, and Haarhof wrote home about "the English lying in heaps on the field, the terrible flies and the stench of dead horses."

By February 1900 Haarhof's letters also reflected the paucity of intelligence gathering along the battle zone, and the general unawareness that the British cavalry were about to break through at Ramdam. He wrote on 12 February, "I am just back from the Koedoesrand as I was escorting a maxim gun. The English at the river are exceptionally quiet, not a shot was fired this morning. I wonder what their next move will be?" The last letter in the collection was from Johnny Haarhof's brother to his landlady, Mrs Witt, on 28 February, "I was in the laager at Modder River Poort for two days before Johnny turned up. He has had a pretty rough time of it; his horse was shot out from under him and he was in rags, you would hardly recognise him."⁶⁶

Like all wars, the rebellion in Aliwal North started with a surprisingly light-hearted air, yellow ribbons were tied in the childrens' hair and at Barkly East in November 1899 the rebels celebrated joining the Free Staters by riding their horses into the hotel bar, through the billiard room and out the back door.⁶⁷ Among the young Burghersdorp rebels was Johannes Petrus Bosman from Paarl, author of *Slaan en Vlug*. He was running a school and was commandeered on Twistkraal by Coetzee of Blaauwkrantz in 1899. Forty years later he recalled how their "hearts burned with sympathy for the Afrikaner and they rode off knowing that they felt at home with the militant republics." The commando had collected at Burghersdorp in an atmosphere of great solemnity, and Bosman, mounted on his horse, stared down at the sea of upturned faces and later remembered that nobody smiled. The families warned their sons to be careful of the khakis and little gifts of bibles, biltong and biscuits were pressed on the young men.⁶⁸

The last village that the Free Staters annexed in the northern Cape was Dordrecht on 12 December. A photograph was taken of 40 young men dressed in their best, grouped around Cmdt Danie

⁶⁶ Fort Beaufort Museum, Johnny and Sydeny Haarhof's letters, to each other and to Mrs Witt, October 1899-February 1900, transcribed by their sister, Miss Mildred Haarhof of Graaff-Rienet.

⁶⁷ Oosthuizen, *Rebelle van die Stormberge*, p67.

⁶⁸ Bosman, *Slaan en Vlug*, pp2-3.

Schoeman of Birds River, and possibly V/C JM de Beer of Bamboesfontein, both wearing large shoulder sashes (28 came without horses, arms or tack, which had to be supplied by the Free Staters). In the background is a large Free State flag. Ten men carried rifles, but bandoliers are nowhere to be seen.⁶⁹

Using the names on the colonial electoral lists of Act 9 of 1892 and forms which read “Op las, Hoog Edele Staat President van der Oranje Vrystaat Artikel 48 van 1899”, over 500 men were commandeered and ordered to report to the laager with a horse, saddle, rifle, 30 cartridges and provisions for eight days. Although it was only a month after the Free State invasion, many colonists were already reluctant to be embroiled in the war. De Beer, appointed Laager Commandant, wrote to JA van Deventer of Rooinek, Dordrecht and asked him to be patient with the disobedient burghers who had left the laager, and promised they would be punished. A further three horses, four buck wagons, 28 draught oxen with gear and fifteen goat wethers, as well as a tarpaulin, were commandeered from ten others on 18 December.⁷⁰ The commandeering of colonists ended after the British and colonial forces invaded the Free State in February 1900.⁷¹

In the Middelburg district in early 1901, Johannes Lötter, a well-known barman on Naauwpoort Station, recruited 150 men from the Midlands to come to the aid of the Afrikaners. Recruits included the well-known marksmen, Stephanus and Louw Vorster of Wolwevlei, and Pieter Wolfaardt of Fairview, Middelburg. Most of the parents of the younger recruits were willing to let their sons join because if they were captured they would only be Class 2 rebels and nothing serious would happen to them. Marthinus van Heerden's father at Conway warned him that if he was captured or if there was blood, there were to be no tears.⁷² Lötter, who had little tactical knowledge, made his headquarters at Compassberg, and trenches were dug near the base. Lötter told them that as he controlled the highest point in the Sneeuberg, he controlled the Midlands. He commandeered forage and horses, and threatened to shoot anybody who reported them to the military.⁷³

When Captains Wilhelm Fouché and Gideon Scheepers swept into Aberdeen they recruited youngsters into their commandos with a mixture of dash and daring. The Boers had raced into the village on 15 January 1901, locked up the police and took 60 horses the Magistrate had bought for the Prime Minister's Office. A crowd gathered in Market Square and Free Stater, Freddy Jamneck, demanded a kiss from all the girls, and then jumped on an untamed colt and gave a dazzling display of horsemanship. The commando raised 36 eager recruits, who raced off to fetch bundles of clothes; many were too excited even

⁶⁹ C Johann de Bruin, cjohann@yebo.co.za, 12 December 2002, re Dordrecht rebels.

⁷⁰ CAR, AG 2133, Miscellaneous documents intercepted by British, B/24, B/8. Translation of notes marked 'Intercepted by intelligence'.

⁷¹ Cory Library, Ms 10.581, letter by May Johnson at Burghersdorp written between November 1899 and 7 March 1900.

⁷² Shearing, *Commandant Johannes Lötter and his Rebels*, p11.

⁷³ *Eastern Province Herald*, 19 September 1901.

to say goodbye to their weeping mothers. By 10 am the commando was riding down the road to Willowmore.⁷⁴

Malan too was the ideal guerilla leader; dynamic and one jump ahead of the British in the Cradock district. But not all rebels found it a 'jolly life' on commando. Rudolph Botha (16) of Klipfontein, Graaff-Reinet, whose brothers were on commando and who had joined because of Malan's stories of the exciting life, said he was terrified when he was shelled on the Vogel River and tried to hide in the prickly pears. He was dragged out by an older rebel and whipped. He was picked up by a British ambulance with a head wound some time later and said he was only too happy to be in custody.⁷⁵ In contrast Joseph Johannes Welsh Erasmus of Modderpoort, Cradock, who joined Malan with his brothers, thought commando life was a dream come true. He explained to his grandson years later that it was not easy to find the Boers, as it was impossible to distinguish a Boer camp from a column's at a distance. It was also dangerous to ride around openly looking for Boers as you could be stopped and questioned. Only when his father was ordered to deliver fodder to a column with the farm wagon did he realise a commando was in the vicinity. Joseph put on his Sunday suit and said goodbye to his father who shook his hand and told him that if he was killed he expected the bullet to be from the front and not the back. He was one of six rebels that joined Malan at Betjeskraal on 25 May 1901.⁷⁶

Duties of a rebel officer

Hermanus Steyn of Ploegfontein Hay, who was Veld Cornet from 3 December 1899 to 1 May 1900 under Cmdt JA Jooste of Matsap, took the oath of office before Landdrost Perry. Steyn was responsible to Jooste and had to provide him with as many men as he required. He signed commandeering notes, and saw that all persons who were commandeered went to the laager properly armed. He never had more than 100 men under him at any one time as a certain number remained on their farms while the others were on commando. In March 1900 Steyn went to Pretoria and asked President Kruger for food for his men, and received guns, ammunition and provisions; Kruger supplied them with Martini-Henrys as he said he had run out of Mausers.⁷⁷

Sarel Venter of Boschaar, Hay said he was a member of the *Krijgsraad* and as Veld Cornet was ordered to identify and commandeer recruits and fine unwilling Afrikaners. He also had to see that all the recruits were armed and generally act as NCO to the Boer forces. He had to obtain supplies, willingly or

⁷⁴ US, Fourie, 23/2, Gebeurtenissen te Aberdeen en Omgewing Gedurende de Oorlog Operaties, 15 February 1901; *Beaufort Courier*, 30 January 1901; *Oudtshoorn Courant* same date said recruits joined without compulsion.

⁷⁵ *Graaff-Reinet Advertiser*, 15 May 1901. Botha was gaoled for two years and in May 1902 returned to Std 9, Paarl Boys High School.

⁷⁶ Erasmus, 'Wedevaringe van Joseph Erasmus', p99.

⁷⁷ CAR, AG 3407, Statement of Hermanus Steyn, 16 June 1900.

unwillingly, and was a member of the committee that distributed foodstuffs.⁷⁸ W Fouché, owner of the Warrenton Pont, who was later accused of helping the Boer forces cross the Vaal, said calmly in court that he had a claim of £500 against the Transvaal Government as some of the commandos promised to pay that sum to be conveyed over the river after the siege of Kimberley was lifted.⁷⁹

Jan Frederick Coetzee of Weltevreden, Albert acted as Veld Cornet in P Steenekamp's laager at Stormberg and Henning Siding. He was seen fully armed at the fight at Loperberg, and also where Collet was killed. He boasted to all and sundry that he turned over the bodies of the dead Englishmen he found and fully intended to shoot those of them that were wounded. Johannes Zacharias Pansegrouw of Burghersdorp, a candidate for election as Veld Cornet, commandeered goods and money and acted as an armed escort to British prisoners-of-war after Stormberg. Gideon Daniel Joubert of Rietfontein, Albert commandeered British subjects, threatened them with fines and acted as Assistant Field Cornet; he commandeered goods, forwarded ammunition that arrived from the Free State, took up arms, went on commando and also harboured a sick Free State burgher on his farm.

At Aliwal North Johannes Christoffel Joubert of Olievenfontein became the Veld Cornet under the Free State Government. He went on commando and provided stock for the Free Staters at Stormberg, and also received arms and ammunition for distribution. Stephanus Naude took office as a Veld Cornet under the Free State, commandeered persons and goods, threatening them with punishment and received rifles and ammunition from the Free State Government. JM Bekker took office under the Free Staters as Postmaster and Clerk to the Landdrost. He also acted as escort to prisoners and tore down the Governor's proclamation.⁸⁰

Andries Jacobus Wagenaar of Vischgat, Aliwal North acted as Landdrost of Jamestown and issued arms on behalf of the Free State. Wagenaar sentenced a black, Windvogel, to ten lashes with a cat o' nine tails for being on the street at night. Koos Jan, the official postcart driver between Aliwal North and Jamestown, called in to act as interpreter, later handed in an affidavit that when a black, Waterpas, was found in a Mrs Jenkins' home, he was sent as a prisoner to Bloemfontein. Another black working for Mrs Hans Henning, complained to Wagenaar that a girl of ten in his family had been raped by Jan Henning, John's son, and could hardly walk for her injuries. However Wagenaar dealt with the matter by threatening to have the man flogged for bringing in filthy complaints against a respectable farmer. Boichy Bekker, the hotelkeeper at Jamestown also mentioned the rape of the girl in his affidavit.⁸¹

⁷⁸ CAR, AG 3407, Indictment against SCJ Venter of Boschaar of Hay, November and April 1900.

⁷⁹ *Grocott's Daily Mail Weekly War Summary*, Kimberley, 18 May 1900, 'Preliminary Examination'.

⁸⁰ CAR, AG 2062, Miscellaneous information on charges of High Treason for Albert and Aliwal North.

⁸¹ CAR, AG 3388, Preliminary Investigation into Charges of High Treason. Affidavits found in the file of Johannes Hendrik Lubbe of Driefontein, Aliwal North.

Looting as a means of war

Looting and the unwarranted destruction of ordinary peoples' properties have left enduring legacies of bitterness that, in some cases, has lasted generations. The destruction of farms by the British and colonial troops in the Orange Free State has been described as "a sort of Sherman's March" by Bradford in 'Gentlemen and Boers'. Homesteads were said to be the targets from the first day the Imperial troops entered the Free State, 11 February 1900.⁸² It is a pity there is no overview of the five months of looting and vandalism of Natal and Cape colonial properties from October 1899 to February 1900 by Free State and Transvaal forces to give the article the necessary balance.

Looting of loyalist properties by rebel forces was widespread north and south of the Orange River during the first invasion. Because the looting of Barkly East loyalist farms was well investigated, and the preparatory examinations by the Magistrate thorough, it is possible to ask when the rebels looted, what did they loot, what did they do with the loot, was any of it ever recovered, and if some general assumptions can be made in a discussion on the matter.

In 24 cases of theft by Barkly East rebels the victims were hotelkeepers, shopkeepers or loyalists whose farms or businesses had been vacated when they were forced to leave the Barkly East district in November 1899. Rebels, acting in groups, carried out widespread looting and destruction of shops and farmhouses. Doors were forced open and windows smashed. John Douglass of Brucedell returned in March 1900 to find his house smashed and the contents carried off; only a few tables and some pots remained. In March 1900 the now surrendered rebels were quite open that they had been involved in the raids.

An accused, Hermanus Johannes Botha of Mostyn, claimed he took the stuff "when the Orange Free State flag was flying, when the Free State commandeered all Afrikaners". He protested at being called a thief, "Cmdt Olivier said we could take loot from the refugees, he said this at Dordrecht. So we took a lot of sheep from Ekron's place, Glengarry. I've always been friendly with Ekron. We never stole them. It was in broad daylight. Anyone could have seen what we were doing. I was justified in doing what I was doing. There was a state of war and the Free Staters said they would win and in no case did the Free State Police take steps against offenders. If I have erred it is through ignorance."⁸³

What kinds of items were looted? The list of stolen goods is considerable and reflects just what was kept on farms and in country stores at the time. Joseph Hendrik Meiring of Mamre admitted to looting, taking from Gilbert Middleton's house at Strydpoort a variety of things including a tub of butter,

⁸² Bradford, 'Gentlemen and Boers' in *Writing a Wider War*, p40.

⁸³ CAR, AG 3395, Hercules J Botha and Hermanus J Botha were indicted for stealing 160 sheep belonging to CT Ekron of Glengarry, Barkly East. In May 1901 they were sentenced to two years with hard labour for theft and two years for treason, sentences to run concurrently.

one cake-mould, two packets of macaroni and one packet of vermicelli. Among other things Johannes Hendrik Vorster of Glencoe took a music stool and two plough shares from Reedsdell. Gert Nicolas Johannes Greyvenstein of Ravenscraig took 28 coffin plates, 36 pieces of coffin trimmings and 23 rolls of wallpaper. Except for the livestock almost none of the stuff stolen was of any use to men on commando, and most of it was recovered unused and stored away in the looter's outhouse. They seemed only too happy to return items to the rightful owners when they returned to their farms in March 1900, and accompanied by the Cape Police went round claiming the stuff. The exception was Richard Peter Barry of Jerpoint who could not produce the cask of brandy belonging to Isaac Rosenberg at the military inquiry held at Mosheshsford under Magistrate TT Shepstone.⁸⁴ This seems to have gone the way of all flesh.

John Thomas Fitzgerald, who owned the Clifford hotel, said he was amazed when he returned in March 1900 to find that a man of local standing such as Jan Hendrik Jacobus Greyvenstein of Bosch Hoek appeared happy to admit that he took the stuff from Fitzgerald's store, and was quite willing to pay if had been used or damaged. He had kept the stuff in an outhouse. Fitzgerald said, "Greyvenstein is a well-off man. He has never been known to steal anything until the war. Why did he do it?" The farmer explained to the Magistrate that the Free State Veld Cornet said it was all right and, anyway, all these things happened when their flag flew.⁸⁵

There were 179 claims for war compensation as a result of the first invasion by Free State forces in Barkly East. Claims of £49,146 were assessed at £28,709 and about a third was paid out initially and the remainder years later. The total amount claimed for war compensation for losses sustained in the Stormberg plus Colesberg region was £313,441, and that was reduced to an assessment of £157,387. The report stated that the enemy or rebels did not damage the property of persons afterwards convicted of High Treason.⁸⁶ One can only assume that once people go over to rebellion and there is no fighting to do, looting becomes a way of expressing feelings in a time of political unrest.

The colonists whose homes had been ruined would hardly have overlooked the destruction of their property. As a result the relationships between the Afrikaner and the English went into a steep decline, and the loyalists became the backbone of the Colonial Defence Force in 1901 during the Second Invasion. The Free Staters, who were so sure their country would never be invaded, were shattered when they found themselves on the receiving end after February 1900 with dire results for their homes and properties.

⁸⁴ CAR, AG 3395, Inquiry at Mosheshsford, RP Barry, P J Pretorius, JH Dry and JF Engelbrecht and others, nd.

⁸⁵ CAR, AG 3394, JHJ Greyvenstein of Boschhoek was indicted for High Treason and theft but only appears to have been disenfranchised for five years in May 1901.

⁸⁶ CAR, Cape of Good Hope, Official Publications, G 60-1904; Cape of Good Hope, Return by Eastern Section, War Losses Compensation Inquiry Commission, 22 March 1902.

Rebels in need of leadership - the battle of Stormberg

Henderson, writing in 1902, stated, "Unless he who prepares a strategic plan has in his mind's eye a clear picture of all military operations...and a personal knowledge of the difficulties which attend on war, his work will be of little value."⁸⁷

A lack of strategic and contingency planning in the weeks before the battle of Stormberg would largely nullify the results of this great victory. It all started so well. Seven hundred mounted rebels rode through Burghersdorp to Stormberg on 20 November 1899, and behind them trundled a maxim, a 7-pounder gun, ammunition wagons and commandos of young men singing hymns, followed by wagonloads of supplies.⁸⁸ They eventually off-saddled in the vicinity of Stormberg, occupied by Grobler and the Bethulie Commando. The local rebels set up camp at nearby Rietfontein and Kalkoenkrans. The following day Asst V/C Nicolaas Kruger of Schalkwykraal led the recruits in the direction of Steynsburg where they destroyed telegraph lines and a bridge in the vicinity of Teebus, ending the day playing *volkspele* with the local girls.⁸⁹ That was it for three weeks and to amuse themselves as they waited for the khaki, the commandos trained their horses and played *jukskei* and other games. They also cemented bonds of friendships that would last down the years. No contact was made with Gatacre's forces.

Their officers, Grobler and Du Plooy, and Pete Steenekamp of Albert also spent time visiting each other planning future tactics involving the newly recruited rebels or sent out patrols. Grobler had bickered with Olivier over the Krupp gun. The rebels on Kalkoenkrans were grooming their horses when a farmer, who lived nearby, raced up and asked them angrily why they were sitting around as the other Boers were all fighting the English.⁹⁰

They arrived at the Battle of Stormberg when it was virtually over. The gunners of the Irish Rifles had accidentally fired on and wounded most of the officers of the Northumberland Fusiliers, and 600 of Gatacre's force were hiding under the cliffs, while the remainder were in full flight back to Molteno. Du Plooy, determined to get a piece of the action, was about to cut up the fleeing foot soldiers when Olivier stopped the pursuit because it was Sunday. Bosman went on to say, in *Slaan en Vlug*, that although the Free Staters had a great victory and now held Stormberg Junction, it all slowly fizzled out into rumour and false alarms as the action moved elsewhere.⁹¹

A contemporary assessment of individual Boer or rebel fighters described them as most useful soldiers; individually they were outstanding shots, good horsemen, good scouts and good skirmishers.

⁸⁷ Henderson, 'War, General Principles', *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, XXXIII, 1902, p742.

⁸⁸ Johnson, MS 10.581, May Johnson's letter.

⁸⁹ Bosman, *Slaan en Vlug*, p4.

⁹⁰ Meintjes, *Stormberg a Lost Opportunity*, p96.

⁹¹ Bosman, *Slaan en Vlug*, p8.

However *en masse* their quality depended of course on the ability of their officers. Especially in the beginning of a campaign recruits needed strong leadership when they were more likely to fail in discipline, and be less enduring under attack or after heavy losses.⁹² In a skirmish between Brabants Horse and the Dordrecht and Barkly East rebels near Jamestown at Christmas 1899, the rebels who had attacked so forcibly faltered through lack of leadership.

A report came through to the Colonial Forces at Bird's River that about 400 rebels were advancing from Jamestown armed with a Krupp gun. A mixed patrol of Cape Police and Brabant's Horse left Halseton Siding for Dordrecht with the men riding on either side of an armoured train for additional cover. They made camp outside Dordrecht and were reinforced by Capt Henry Lukin, in command of four CMR guns, on 27 December. The colonial forces spent the day digging trenches around the camp, preparing for an all out attack.⁹³ On the rebel front Cmdt Danie Schoeman asked V/C Van Niekerk at Barkly East for help, and he promised to send 80 men who were armed with small arms and the Krupp gun.⁹⁴

The senior British Officer, Capt R de Montmorency VC, 21st Lancers, arrived at the Brabant's camp and changed their plans, detailing 100 men to scout and establish the strength of the Boer forces. At the turnoff to Jamestown he divided the men further and sent them in different directions. These small groups found themselves in difficulty when a large party of rebels, concealed behind a ridge, began firing at 2,000 (1,828 m) yards. The rebel forces riding under cover moved in groups towards a *kopje*, and kept up the attack. Most of the patrol fell back and gained the shelter of a donga from where they kept up a steady fire at the rebel forces. When Flannagan of Brabants' Horse realised that the rebels were outflanking them, he ordered them to retire to camp, but they could still have been in difficulty had the experienced Capt Lukin not raced out with his guns. He fired at the rebel position and a shell killed Gert Barnard and Johannes Henning of Bamboeshoek, Molteno and seriously wounded the Barkly East leader, Jan de Wet of Mosheshsford.⁹⁵ The Krupp gun replied with nine shells that overshot the range and missed the colonial forces.

Under the protection of the CMR guns the colonial forces retired, and counted themselves lucky that only one of their men was wounded. Back in camp they realised that some of the men were missing and on Capt Lukin's insistence they went back to rescue them, expecting stiff opposition. The missing colonial troopers were found unharmed in a donga and reported that the rebels had suddenly withdrawn after shooting five horses. The puzzle was solved when the colonials returned to camp again to find that it

⁹² Colonel GFR Henderson, 'War, General Principles', *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, XXXIII, 1902, p747.

⁹³ Cory Library, Ms 17.015, Letter of Capt Robert George Mullins of Brabants Horse, 4 January 1900.

⁹⁴ CAR, AG 2133, Miscellaneous documents intercepted by British, B/26, Message to DW Schoeman, 26 December 1899.

⁹⁵ Oosthuizen, *Rebelle van die Stormberge*, p239.

had been looted. The consensus of the colonials was, had the Boers not distracted themselves by raiding the camp, they could easily have inflicted numerous casualties and taken prisoners.⁹⁶

It is not certain where Olivier was during the skirmish, but he returned to Stormberg Junction with the Krupp gun and left an old field gun, Martini-Henry rifles and a message for Schoeman that they could defend the Dordrecht district on their own.⁹⁷ The Landdrost of Aliwal North complained to Bloemfontein that the rebels lacked leadership and it was scandalous how they were being left to their fate.⁹⁸

The attack by De Villiers on Warren's force at Fabersputs illustrates the point that a guerilla leader cannot sustain high losses or his men's morale will fall, which in turn will encourage desertion. Sir Charles Warren, ordered to clear Griqualand West of rebel forces, waited for supplies. He camped at Fabersputs in the Douglas district, which had an adequate supply of water for the animals in the columns. Its strategic weakness was being surrounded by thick bush and bounded by ridges to the north and south.⁹⁹ Warren organised his camp, occupying a house to the east of the water near a road to Kimberley, and the DEOVR, with a maxim gun, camped near a kraal to the north of Warren's headquarters. The Army Service Corps camped on the northern end of the water, and 'E' Battery of the Royal Canadian Field Artillery with four guns were close by while the Imperial Yeomanry guarded the horse lines nearby.¹⁰⁰

Warren ignored a warning that De Villiers was planning an attack, and only put out four isolated pickets. However the suspicious Col WA Spence of the Duke Of Edinburgh's Own Volunteer Rifles ordered a maxim gun to be mounted on a nearby roof and instructed his men not to stack their rifles, but to sleep under arms.¹⁰¹ De Villiers attacked the next day, 29 May 1900, at dawn. Cmdt Casper Vorster, leading the Hay and Barkly West rebels, attacked the DEOVR from the northern ridge.¹⁰² The Postmasburg men, led by V/C Venter, who had hidden in old diamond pits on the southern ridge, attacked the Canadian and Imperial Yeomanry camp, while De Villiers, with 56 of his best shots, crept up the garden between the ridges and attacked Paget's Horse, the Canadians and the Imperial Yeomanry. A single warning shot from a picket alerted the camp. Although Col Spence was killed early in the attack, the DEOVR eventually drove Vorster off while Venter's men stampeded 70 Yeomanry horses before they

⁹⁶ Cory Library, Ms 17.015, Capt Robert George Mullins' letter; Oosthuizen, *Rebelle van die Stormberge*, p239, re deaths of Barnard and Henning. Pieter Roux's statement that 90 men were killed and ten wounded is exaggerated. These casualties are not reflected in the *South African Field Forces Casualty List*, and a search of the Dordrecht graveyard drew a blank.

⁹⁷ *Grocott's Daily Mail Weekly War Summary*, 10 February 1900. 'Deserted by 'Sneak' Rebels'; Oosthuizen, *Rebelle van die Stormberge*, p81.

⁹⁸ Oosthuizen, *Rebelle van die Stormberge*, p92.

⁹⁹ Reid, *Our Little Army in the Field*, p88.

¹⁰⁰ Miller, *Painting the Map Red*, pp201-203.

¹⁰¹ McKenzie, *The History of the Duke of Edinburgh's Own Rifles*, pp42-43.

¹⁰² Vorster, 'Kommandant Jan Vorster, alias Jan Pieter Retief, Kaapse Rebel, *Military History Journal*, Vol 7, No 4, December, 1987, pp146-151.

withdrew.¹⁰³ Hand to hand fighting took place between the Canadians and De Villiers' men in the vicinity of the guns; as the Canadian right section dragged two guns to higher ground while under fire. After fighting nearly two hours, De Villiers and his men withdrew, afraid of being cut off. But the rebels had the best of it as they had killed Col Spence and 26 members of Warren's force and wounded about 32 others.¹⁰⁴ When the rebels discovered that thirteen of their men had been killed by the DEOVR maxim on the roof and an unknown number were wounded, they were horrified at their losses. This was the chief reason why 300 Griqualand rebels surrendered a few days later.

Desolate letters

Daniel Johannes van Wyk of Dekalong, Kuruman, who took part in the siege of Kimberley, discovered firsthand how war could tear close-knit families apart. He was among the burghers surprised by the Kimberley garrison when they came under attack from a distance of 600 yards near the Ottoskoppie Mine on 12 November 1899. Van Wyk wrote to his girlfriend Miss A de Roman, "Yesterday we had a fight three miles (five kms) from Kimberley on the open flats. The Reds fired at us for three hours. Three of us are badly wounded and our horses are badly wounded. Gert Nel's horse is shot dead. The fight was too much for me to describe. It is the second time my Mauser has fired. We were really in the enemy's hand when the Lord helped us. One of these days we will raise the flag at Kuruman and Kimberley; Kimberley is dangerous."

The autumn of 1900 then became a time of despair for Van Wyk. His dream of an easy victory was gone, their tight-knit family had been torn apart. The letter is torn and stained; parts are illegible. It was probably written in March 1900 after Paardeberg. "I am going on leave tomorrow with Gert Gouws and Gert Nel and Fred van Deventer. Fanie Kriege had been shot dead. I never imagined in my heart that I would have such a hard time. The English fight hard. My father is a prisoner-of-war.....and my brother is in Natal.....my brother-in-law also...I am not sure if my brother has been shot dead.....I hope he is captured..... I have lost all my family....My beloved father I won't ever forget. As long as I live I will take revenge... As long as I can stand on my feet. It's raining terribly and it looks as though it will keep on."¹⁰⁵

¹⁰³ Amery (ed), *The Times History*, II, pp234-235; Miller, *Painting the Map Red*, p204.

¹⁰⁴ McKenzie, *The History of the Duke of Edinburgh's Own Rifles*, pp42-43.

¹⁰⁵ CAR, AG 2037, Correspondence Anglo-Boer War and High Treason, Kuruman 1900-1904, Folio 15, Case 58, Ward 2, quoted from DJ van Wyk's of Dekalong's letters to Miss A de Roman. First letter reads, "gister het ons een geveg gehad drie myl van Kimberlie op die kale vlakte het die Rooiens op ons gevuur vir drie uur and half uur lank. Drie van ons is sleg gewond. Gert Nel zyn paard dood geskiet. Die geveg waar veel maal om eintlik te spreek. Dit is die tweede mal wat my Mauser knal. Ons was maar eintlik in the vyand se hand toe geef die Here ons gehulp. Een van die dag sal ons die vlag steek te Kuruman en Kimberlie. Kimberlie is gevaarlik." Second letter reads, "Ek gaan

Commandants and leadership style

The rebellion was a consequence of the impact of external factors from over the frontier. From the beginning the republican officers dominated the rebels in the Cape Colony. The only rebel leader who wielded any real power throughout the war was Gen De Villiers, whose dramatic style benefited by being in the proximity of Gen De la Rey. Nevertheless De Villiers had the skill to combine leadership and tactics, and to coordinate with other rebel groups, as well as the Transvaal commandos over the frontier. Loyalty to De la Rey was probably the key factor that led rebels to rejoin at the end of 1900 in Griqualand West. Cmdt Hendrik Lategan of Colesberg also fought under De la Rey, and although his commando dwindled, he fought through two and a half years of the war. Gen Oliver's autocratic behaviour towards the rebels in the Stormberg soured the relationships between them, and played a part in the collapse of the first rebellion.¹⁰⁶

Daan Scheepers of Upsal discussed the tensions between the Free Staters on commando in 1901. He divided them into a richer, better class that he thought would not surrender, and the poorer ones, 'the looters', who were always a danger to the commando because of their lack of discipline and because they had no staying power. It made sense that the commando did not all attack a small patrol, nor could they afford to let everybody fight at the same time. But the hard fact was this; it was seldom that more than 25% of fighters took an active part in a fight. The reason was that the British soldiers outnumbered the burghers by great odds; who always had to do their utmost to keep position. As soon as the officer was out of sight the cowards would retire on the sly. The men near them would get the wind up and fall back; within a few minutes the whole line could be broken through lack of discipline.¹⁰⁷

Kritzinger's failing was that he was a decent man who simply did not have a tight hold over his men. In early June 1901 the commando had reached Wildefontein in the Dordrecht district where they had taken shelter after capturing ammunition and rifles at Jamestown Scheepers, who went out scouting miles from the camp, heard the deep notes of the evening hymn carrying over the veld. He raced back to the farm and warned Kritzinger and the other officers that their singing was calling the khaki to the camp, but they shrugged him off. Instead of striking camp and preparing for an attack or moving off, nothing was done.

morgen met verlof met Gert Gouws en Gert Nel and Fred van Deventer. Fanie Kriege is dood geskiet. Ik het nooit gedink ek kry so swaar in myn hart. Die engelse veg maar hart. Vader is ok gevang,.....en myn Broeder ok te Natal,...myne zwaar ook...deswee of myne broeder dood geskiet is....ek hoop hy gevang is....ek het als myne famelie verloor...dat ik daar met overkom. Denk so ik slaplose nagte heef over my vanmelie...Myn dierbare vader sal ik nommer vergeet. Zoo lank ik leeft sal ik wraak neem, so lank ik op myn voete staan. Dit regen verskrik baye en dit lyk dit sal dagen aanhou"; CAR, AG 2037, Folio 15, Treason Charge 52, refers to Gert Nel whose horse was killed at Kimberley and who handed over a Martini-Henry rifle, ZAR 13796, when he surrendered on 12 July 1900.

¹⁰⁶ Greyling, *Greyling Boerehelde*, nd, p8.

¹⁰⁷ *Somerset Budget*, 'Memoirs of D du P Scheepers', 26 May 1962.

At dawn a Boer sentry fired a warning shot and another raced through the camp barefoot shouting that the mountain was full of Tommies, but this only led to confusion when other rebels shouted the pickets down, saying it was only a patrol returning to the laager. Suddenly Lukin of the CMR, with his orderly behind him, slid down the hillside and made a dramatic appearance in the *werf*. Troopers with rolls of wire tied to their saddles followed shouting to the rebels to put their hands up. Willem Steyn, a Cradock rebel, struggling to mount a carthorse, suspected a practical joke, shouted angrily at the troopers "Don't play the fool like that, we'll all shoot each other!" He recognised the CMR uniform, too late. The troopers did not fire; they just grabbed the rifles from the young rebels and tied eighteen of them up with the wire. Kritzinger and the Free Staters fled, said Scheepers. It was every man for himself as Kritzinger, who had trusted to luck, fled into the darkness with the rest of his men.¹⁰⁸

In comparison to Kritzinger's laxness, Cmdt W Fouché made his men stand watch no matter how hot the pursuit through the day. As the weather turned bitter all over the Colony in 1901, Fouché broke north and reached Perdeverlies in Aliwal North in a snowstorm. His men had hardly dismounted when they became embroiled in a scrap with Lovat's Scouts. Gorringer's Column joined the pursuit, and the rebels rode shoot and scoot for three days until they reached the shelter of the Stormberg.¹⁰⁹ Fouché had forbidden fires, and Willem Steyn said the rain washed their clothes; they fought all day and stood watch at night.¹¹⁰ When Lukin tried to pursue him, Fouché led his young rebels onto the mountaintops. Pietie de Wet remembered sleeping crouched over his saddle, trying to keep off the frozen ground. They raced through the Kraai River with the enemy at their heels, hoping to rest at Driefontein. During the night their pickets reported the noise of troop movements, so in the pitch dark Fouché led them further to Ezelsklip where they hid until the columns decided to try and round up Scheepers in the Camdeboo instead.¹¹¹

Of course, said one of the youngsters years later, we also had luck. We were dead tired, fleeing with Scobell behind us, when a farmer suddenly appeared from behind a rock near some hills and said quietly, "I am not of your party and I don't see chance for you fellows, but I don't want you on my conscience for the rest of my life. Don't go that way. Rather take this path over the ridge." Fouché looked at the man, nodded, and they went the other way.¹¹²

From June 1901 Gen Sir John French, stationed at Middelburg, used massed columns to drive Kritzinger's commando over the Orange River. The columns marched south, contracting their fronts, and the commandos slipped through. At a given point the columns reversed direction, opened up their fronts

¹⁰⁸ *Frontier Guardian*, 6 June 1901; Shearing, *The Brave Boer Boy and Other Stories*, p59, 'Off to Join the Rebels'.

¹⁰⁹ *Midland News*, 19 June 1901.

¹¹⁰ Steyn, 'Kaapse Rebel te Bermuda', p19.

¹¹¹ War Museum of the Boer Republics, Anon diary, 4299/4, 6 June 1901; Oosthuizen, *Rebelle van die Stormberge*, pp170-171.

¹¹² The Memoirs of Oom Frans (no surname given) recorded on tape in 1971. Private archives of Mrs K Steyn of Port Elizabeth.

and drove the commandos northwards in a wide sweep. French controlled the movements of the columns by heliograph as he had established relay stations between Middelburg and Bloemfontein.¹¹³ By 13 August Daan Scheepers said they had been pushed as far north as Ruiterskraal near Venterstad, and wherever they looked dust from the converging columns was swirling in the sky. When Kritzinger organised his forces he placed Capt 'Bontjan' van Heerden of Middelburg with the Midland rebels at the northern end, then Lion Cachet with his men and then Louis Wessels of Vrede with his few men, while he took charge of the centre section.

Kritzinger warned Scheepers, in command of the southern point, that he must not allow himself to be outflanked. It was an ill-fated day, said Daan Scheepers. They fought on an open terrain not of their own choosing, without cover and the columns sensing victory stayed on the attack. He had been forced to ride an untrained carthorse, as his riding horses were finished. He had dismounted and fired at a group of Cape Police, driving them back. When he tried to remount the frightened horse backed in circles; he had his foot in the stirrup, when the horse slipped and fell on Scheepers, whose femur snapped. As he lay helpless on the ground two young rebels, Pen Wessels and Johannes van der Walt raced to his rescue under heavy fire. The news had also spread down the Boer lines that Commandant Lion-Cachet had collapsed and died from a spent bullet in his brain.

When the hard-pressed Boer forces saw the injured Scheepers being led from the field, they broke and fled for the Free State with Kritzinger in the lead. Louis Wessels, who was collecting stragglers, came across Scheepers hours later, still on the horse and determined to stay there until his friends could get him into hiding. Wessels sent a party of rebels with Scheepers to the Bamboes Mountains; some of whom, tried to fetch food and were cut off. The pursuit was so unremitting that eventually Scheepers only had Steytler van Wyk with him. He hid Scheepers in a kloof and organised a sympathetic family to care for him, and a young boy and girl took turns bringing him food. He lay under a *kuniebos* in the veld and set his own leg nine days later. He eventually remained in the veld for ten weeks during an exceptionally cold winter with a troop of baboons acting as scouts. He was still using a crutch when he decided to rejoin the Boer forces.¹¹⁴ Rebels were not decorated for gallantry then, but that did not mean that many of them did not deserve medals.

Cmdt Johannes Lötter was a protégé of Pieter Kritzinger, but after he was driven out of the Cape Colony in August 1901 Lötter did not survive on his own for three weeks before he was captured. Had he divided his men into small groups some of them would probably have got away, and had he put sentries

¹¹³ On Saltpetre Kop near Cradock, site of a relay station, a checkerboard and soldiers' names are engraved on the dolerite rocks.

¹¹⁴ *Somerset Budget*, 'Commandant D du P Scheepers Memoirs', 1962; NAR, Microfilm 757, Kritzinger's report on Ruiterskraal (translated version, undated).

out at the top of the path to Bouwershoek the night they were captured, he would have been warned that the enemy were approaching. But Lötter's lack of vigilance meant that the column surprised him.¹¹⁵

In contrast, Maritz was a leader who demanded instant obedience. In August 1901 Willem (Wolf) Steenkamp of Oorlogskloof, Sutherland, joined the commando and was ordered by Maritz to climb a tree and keep watch. He fell asleep and fell out of the tree onto the ground, his gun fired and the bullet just missed him. He was still half dazed when the enraged Maritz began sjambokking him for disobedience.¹¹⁶

Unarmed blacks as victims

Much of the South African War makes harrowing reading, and it is the suffering of those who were not able to fight back that leaves an enduring legacy of bitterness between the races. The racist concept that a black's life had little value was commonplace among the Boer commandos. It became easy for some rebels to condone the killing of black scouts because they were a danger to their security.

By February 1900 Gen Snyman, callous in the extreme, ordered the rebels to shoot blacks leaving Mafeking, and that they could kill them and bring their cattle to the laager. Hendrik Jacobus Bruwer, a former Free Stater, described how he went out on patrol under V/C Reineke to 'flush out' the blacks near Grobbelaarsdam. In February 1900 Bruwer, with FJ van der Merwe, MI Moolman and D van Rooyen, were on patrol when they found a goat belonging to a Boer in the vicinity of a *Stadt*. As a reprisal they flogged some black men, set their huts alight and then drove the men, women and children into the bush, firing at them because they believed one to be armed; they subsequently found two men shot through the head. All the huts were torched. A similar incident was described in March 1900 in which Piet – a black man – was wounded and was then shot by Reineke when he asked to be put out of his misery.¹¹⁷

Frances Brink of Faith said her brother Louis and other rebels shot the black people on General Snyman's orders. After the siege was raised, Francis commented that "a lot of rebels were in gaol as they thought the blacks fair game and shot them like flies."¹¹⁸ Snyman had flouted the basic condition of the Geneva Convention of 1864, to which the SA Republic was a signatory, and returned to the Transvaal when the siege was raised. The Mafeking rebels were left to pay the ultimate price for obeying his orders.

There are official lists of names of black people killed or flogged in the Griqualand districts during 1900 and 1901, but the identities of the assailants are uncertain.¹¹⁹ Fouché was quite open about the killings. Four Boers in Fouché's Commando stopped AG Schoombie of Lemoenkloof, driving sheep into

¹¹⁵ Shearing, *Commandant Johannes Lötter and his Rebels*, pp28-30.

¹¹⁶ Pers com, Manie van der Merwe of Sutherland; CAR, AG 2116, sentenced under Proclamation 100 of 1902 at Clanwilliam 10 June 1902.

¹¹⁷ War Museum of the Boer Republics, No 4733/1, statements by H Bruwer, 28 February and 19 March 1901.

¹¹⁸ Brink, 'A Girl's Story', hand-written memoir, Clarks Bookshop, Cape Town, Catalogue 98 of 1997, no 484, p47.

¹¹⁹ CAR, Cd 888, Further correspondence relative to the treatment of natives by Boers, p5.

Jamestown in October 1901. These armed men took away a drover, Witbooi, saying he was a spy and they intended to shoot him. The following day Schoombie received a message that he was to send two black men to Telemachus Kop to bury Witbooi.¹²⁰ The murder of unarmed scouts became so rife that Kitchener contacted Hely-Hutchinson saying that the rebels were indiscriminately shooting down natives in cold blood. After discussion Kitchener was given permission to arm drivers, scouts and camp followers. By March 1902 over 4,500 were armed in the Cape Colony on Kitchener's responsibility, although the Colonial Office disapproved.¹²¹ One of the most notorious for these killings was Cmdt Nesor, who trekked around the Sutherland and Fraserburg districts, and who boasted that he shot all armed coloured people that he found. At Rhebokfontein seven unarmed coloured men were executed. In the beginning he claimed that his rebel recruits were shocked at the killings, but later became accustomed to it. Diederick Louw of Maraisburg, previously in Van Reenen's Commando, asked if he could become executioner as he enjoyed it.¹²²

The casual killings became widespread. At Taaibosfontein, Richmond a commando captured three black scouts as well as a white man named Piet Kok towards the end of 1901. He was told to supervise the digging of their four graves as it was intended that he would be shot and buried with them. When Kok became hysterical the Boers let him go, but still shot the black men. The graves can still be identified.¹²³

When Gen Smuts arrived in the north-west Cape he was very concerned about the situation, and issued a proclamation on 19 December 1901 ordering the commandos to treat all peaceable inhabitants, whether white or black, well. Nesor ignored the proclamation.¹²⁴ After Maritz and his men fell back from Darling in November, the columns kept watch, their fires encircling the commando. The local story is that black scouts were executed and buried in the ash heap. But the Boers were too tired to do a good job and as they rode away, long before dawn, pairs of feet with shoes still on stuck out of the ash, a bleak reminder of that night's work.¹²⁵

Blacks retaliate

When black and coloured men were armed they became capable fighters, good tacticians who could be as merciless as some of the rebels. In a notable incident the Border Scouts (so-called Bastards) under Capt JB Ramsbotham and Lieut J Beresford ambushed Edwin Conroy and the Kakamas rebels at

¹²⁰ NAR, FK 823, Statement of AG Schoombie of Jamestown, 1 October 1901. This is only one among many such statements in this file.

¹²¹ Le May, *British Supremacy in South Africa*, p101.

¹²² Wessels (ed), *Die Oorlogsherinneringe van Kommandant Jacob Petrus Nesor*, pp74-75.

¹²³ Pers com, CJ Erasmus, PO Box 58, Richmond, 1989.

¹²⁴ WK Hancock and J van der Poel (eds), *Selections from the Smuts Papers*, I, XCVI, no 330, p458.

¹²⁵ Smith, *Ek Rebelleer*, pp90-91; Pers com, Mrs EJ Smit at Darling Museum.

N'Rougas on 27 May 1901. Conroy, the new leader of the Kakamas rebels had laagered at Dwaalgees, twelve miles (nineteen kms) from Kenhardt with a strong commando. He reacted angrily to the news that three scouts had been seen at the nearby farm N'Rougas, Conroy called for volunteers to chase the so-called Basters out with bullwhips. The more cautious rebels tried to stop him, suspecting that 30 youngsters might be too few if they attacked armed Border Scouts. Conroy was furious and threatened to whip anybody who followed and raced off with his young rebels. This threat would have catastrophic consequences when the party were later in dire straits.

According to Kotze, the Border Scouts under Ramsbotham and Beresford had set their ambush well. Three Scouts raced across a dry riverbed when Conroy appeared, as part of a trap to entice them. Hidden from sight were 70 armed Scouts, who held their fire until the riders were in the target area, and then fired at their horses, killing most of them. Only Henry Wickens managed to get away with his horse unwounded, and he met the son of the owner of the farm, gave him the horse and sent him down to Dwaalgees to get help. Meanwhile the remainder of the commando at Dwaalgees had heard the shooting, but did not investigate because of the threat of a whipping from Conroy.

The men with Conroy, now all on foot, hid in isolated pockets in the *driedoring* thickets. Conroy and a group with him escaped unharmed on foot, but did not return to Dwaalgees or mount a counter attack. By this time three youngsters had all been killed trying to go for help. Later Japie Wasserfall realised the Scouts were using the protection of a kraal wall to encircle them, and got some of the rebels to safety. William Walton suffered an appalling death when a bullet hit his bandolier, causing an explosion. He fled into the *veld* and his badly charred body was only found two days later.

The remaining group of rebels near the riverbed were caught in a cross fire and three were shot as they tried to escape. Four others broke out together, running zigzag to lessen the chances of being hit. They reached the safety of a donga unharmed when one of them, Abraham Jooste, refused to move any further and threw his rifle into a bush and his bandoleer after it. Van Zyl warned him that his lead pointed bullets would get him into trouble, but he stayed where he was. Twenty yards further Van der Westhuysen was shot in the head and Hendrik Jacobs in the heel. Van Zyl, now alone, raced back to swop Jacob's Lee-Metford for his Martini-Henry, but Jacobs sent him on and covered his retreat as well as that of Kootjie Knouwds and Johannes Minnie who made a sudden appearance. As the three dashed past him Jacobs kept up a steady covering fire, driving the Scouts back. Further on Knouwds caught six bullets in the chest, went down and lay screaming for mercy. Two others escaped when a horse belonging to a Border Scout cantered up near them; Floris Vermeulen jumped into the saddle and Charl du Plessis grabbed the horse's tail and it carried them about 600 yards to freedom. Mans Stadler ran behind and was the last youngster to get away.

As the wounded and dying lay helpless in the sand the discipline of the Border Scouts broke, and they killed some of the wounded rebels. Minnie and Johannes Liebenberg, about whom little is known, were stoned to death. Those who buried them said their teeth were all knocked out and their faces cut to ribbons. As Gabriel Bonthuys and Husselman lay helpless watching a Border Scout called Jason, who had worked for Willem Nel's father, who claimed the right to finish Nel off. His first shot hit Nel's bandolier and drove the bullet fragments into the wound. He was shot twice in the arm when a horrified Beresford raced up, called his men to order and stopped the slaughter.

Beresford ordered the owner of N'Rougas to move the wounded to the farmhouse and left to get transport. The commando arrived shortly afterwards and rescued the wounded. Knowwds with six bullets in the chest, Bonthuys and Husselman survived, as did Willem Nel, although he never recovered the use of his arm. The rebel casualties were high; seven rebels were killed or died of wounds, seven were wounded and three were taken prisoner. Hendrik Jacobs and Abraham Jooste were executed for being in possession of dum-dum bullets and joining the rebellion while still on parole from the first rebellion.¹²⁶

Once Conroy reached Kakamas he wrote a complaint about the ill treatment of his wounded men to the Commandant of Kenhardt; and received the verbal reply, "We do not recognise rebel leaders." The letter was referred to the Police Commissioner in Kimberley, who asked for a report. Capt White denied the charge of murder, stating that many rebels were shot at close range, some receiving five bullets in the head and body. He blamed the rebels for using lead tipped bullets, and said that one of his men had a leg amputated because of a wound from a dum-dum bullet.¹²⁷

The matter ended when Ramsbotham, Beresford, Sgt-Maj Bowers, Sgts Whitefield and Scout Adamson all received a mention in despatches for bravery at the fight of N'Rougas on 17 May. Only Lieut J Beresford did not live to read his mention as he was killed on 25 June 1901 at Wilgenhoutsdrift on the Orange River when the Border Scouts, part of Capt White's force, were involved in a further skirmish with Conroy and the Kakamas rebels along the Orange River.¹²⁸

In the Eastern Cape, later in the year armed blacks fought off a rebel incursion near Ugie in November 1901. Rebel attempts to enter tribal territory to get food, rifles and ammunition, actions that increasingly angered the blacks. Jan Bezuidenhout of Rouxville (in Piet Wessels' Commando) crossed over near Thompson's Footpath in tribal lands on 20 November 1901 with a commando of 53 men, consisting mainly of his family and nine or ten rebels.

¹²⁶ *Gordonia News*, 'The fight at N'Rougas' by HN Kotze, a teacher who had interviewed survivors; 17 April 1957; Kotze, *Oorlog Sonder Oorwinning*, pp 73-85.

¹²⁷ CAR, AG 2033, White to Chief of Police Kimberley, 19 June 1901; Kotze, *Oorlog Sonder Oorwinning*, pp84-85.

¹²⁸ *South African Field Force Casualty List*, Section July to December 1901, Border Scouts, p95; *Oudishoorn Courant*, 8 July 1901, 'Kenhardt, Capt White in pursuit of Conroy'.

When the incursion was reported Capt Herbert Elliot at Philipskop was ordered to occupy Gatsberg Nek, and he moved 200 armed Matatiele and Qumbu blacks into a defensive barrier where they waited for Maj Raw, who was stationed 25 miles (40 kms) away. Col W Stanford had kept the tribesmen on the defensive against their will, and when the Boers appeared Elliot ordered them to open fire to drive them back and the Qumbu contingent to outflank the Boers and hold their position. This time the black troops would not be held back, and they streamed down and attacked the Boers, killing five rebels, including V/C Petrus Andries Labuschagne of Schilderkrantz, Wodehouse, a rebel of the first invasion, and 15 year-old PJA Botha, possibly from the Free State. John Wilhelm Annandale of Schilderkrantz, Barkly East was taken prisoner.

Capt Elliot called his troops back and stopped any further pursuit. He was returning to camp when Jan Bezuidenhout waylaid Elliot and killed him and wounded three other officers. Elliot's men killed Bezuidenhout's father in the shoot out that followed. The Selby Scouts pursued the fleeing commando, who abandoned 83 horses, ten rifles and 370 rounds of ammunition. When Raw recovered the bodies of the Boer dead the next day they found that a cut a couple of inches long had been made below the navel in four of the Boers. It was a black belief that this incision stopped evil befalling the slayer. The commando retreated back over the Drakensberg, most of them on foot. Those who still had horses joined Fouché, and the remainder lived from hand to mouth until the end of the war.¹²⁹

Under the Hague Rules "it was forbidden to kill or wound an enemy who having laid down his arms, or having no longer a means of defence, has surrendered at his discretion."¹³⁰ The large number of killings of unarmed blacks indicates that many Boers did not make this distinction, and viewed a black as a spy and an enemy and fair game whether he was armed or not. The events at N'Rougas and Gatsberg Nek show that many armed blacks also viewed wounded Boers as easy victims and not as an opportunity to show mercy.

Rebellious women

The South African War was and is a white man's war. Grundlingh puts it bleakly; in terms of death, the white women's war-fatalities in the concentration camps were more than double the number of men killed in action on both sides.¹³¹ As a consequence of the culture of the times, the Victorian woman did not stand behind her man in the same way as the *Voortrekker* women did. Nevertheless throughout the

¹²⁹ *The Frontier Guardian*, 6 December 1901; CAR, D/D 1/81 6316, report of WE Stanford, 10 December 1901.

¹³⁰ The War Office, *A Manual of Military Law*, Chapter XIV, p244.

¹³¹ Albert Grundlingh, 'The National Women's Monument: The Making and Mutation of Meaning in Afrikaner Memory of the South African War', in Cuthbertson, Greg, Grundlingh, Albert and Suttie, Mary-Lynn, *Writing a Wider War*, p19.

Cape Colony we get glimpses, often only glimpses it is true, of rebelliously active Afrikaner women who cannot be fitted into the usual stereotype as victims of war.

The women fall into three groups; women who were punished for feeding and caring for family members on commando; those who were rebellious in their own right, and those who broke Martial Law regulations and profited from them.

There are accounts of women punished for feeding their family, but these stories appear in family histories and not in official accounts. Jacobus Francois Erasmus of Grootvlei, Cradock had a sister who was jailed for feeding the commando, as was his heavily pregnant wife. His son, Jacobus CK Erasmus, say the family, was born in the Cradock Gaol on 10 June 1901.¹³² Letje Serfontein of Rietfontein, Oudtshoorn was gaoled for three months for feeding Smuts and his commando on 18 October 1901. She told the Magistrate she would go to gaol, but she wasn't eating their food. Her son Hans brought three meals a day to the George Gaol. Here again the records show that four other members of the family were gaoled for up to nine months for 'assisting the enemy', 'being in possession of a gun' and 'travelling without a permit', but Letje's punishment has not been traced in the Martial Law records.¹³³

Lenie and Hanna Marais of Kareebosch, Cradock were two angry sisters. Lenie, tall and strong, known locally as 'Samson', was said to be as strong as an ox. In September 1901 Capt Gillwald of the Cape Police stated in court in Cradock that on the day of the attack on Fish River Station on 23 February 1901 he had proceeded to Karreefontein and proceeded to search the premises. He received no opposition from the elder prisoner (Isaac Stephanus Marais), but the female portion of the household was very abusive. He found that remnants of fodder were everywhere, and he found an unusual amount of grain in the loft. The witness took Marais and his two sons prisoner and the women and children were removed to the Port Elizabeth Exile Camp.¹³⁴ According to family tradition the women stood on the top of the loft steps and swore at the Cape Police, who first tried to reason with them, and were then forced to rush up the ladder and drag them down by their skirts.¹³⁵

The rebel ladies of Maraisburg came to prominence when Cmdt Gert van Reenen entered the village on 11 March 1901. Sergeant Durandt of the Cape Police and the Magistrate, CR Vaughan, were arrested by the Boers and were being marched through the Market Square when they saw a number of local girls, including the daughter of the Mayor and a local Justice of Peace, holding the Transvaal flag, singing its anthem and also kissing the Boers.¹³⁶ Maj Shute referred to them on 7 September 1901: "When the Boers went through Maraisburg and a lot of Dutch girls welcomed them." The Acting Commandant

¹³² CAR, AG 2096, persons who have joined the enemy from Cradock; CAR, Cd 1364, The Royal Commission.

¹³³ Shearing, *General Jan Smuts and his Long Ride*, p93.

¹³⁴ *Eastern Province Herald*, 19 September 1901, 'The Attack on Fish River'.

¹³⁵ Pers com, J Coetzee, Potchefstroom, 1999.

¹³⁶ CAR, ZP 21/1/375, 'Occupation of Maraisburg' 11 March 1901.

subsequently put them into gaol and they were forgotten until Gen Inigo Jones ordered their release. Scheepers Strydom referred to the incident, stating that a Mrs Martha Brooks and nine girls were charged in court on 11 September 1901. The charges related to the kissing of the Boers and also that Mrs Brooks, who ran a bakery, allowed the commando to take as much bread as they wanted. Three girls were acquitted and four others, including Mrs Brooks, were sentenced to 30 days imprisonment.¹³⁷ The Assistant Magistrate had been insulted and locked up in his own gaol and his wife and children locked up in their own lavatory for a considerable time, and the police horses were taken and shops were looted.¹³⁸ It was only to be expected that steps were taken against the girls when the Magistrate and his family had been made to look like fools.

There are references to rebellious women about whom nothing is known except a name: Mrs Jourina Suzman of Vosburg, Victoria West who is listed in an undated General Index of alleged rebels as no 1461. No further information on her has been traced.¹³⁹

Three women who made a profit from the war by 'contravening the liquor regulations' were gaoled under Martial Law. Fanny Groenewald of Oudtshoorn was sentenced on 3 March 1902 to Imprisonment with Hard Labour for one year. Maria James of Mankorans received the same sentence and Sarah (no surname stated) was sentenced to six months on 3 March also for the same offence. All three were released by the order of the Royal Commission into the Revision of Martial Law cases.¹⁴⁰

The most long lasting of all the rebellious women was Miss Lettie Aurret of Aberdeen, founder of the *Loyal Afrikaner anti-English Spinsters of Aberdeen*, who refused to have her letter censored and sent them down to the Aberdeen Road station by hand and would not post them at the Post Office. She was fined £10 and refused to pay the fine. The Magistrate then sentenced her to the 30 days in prison, and this sentence was to have expired on 9 August 1901.¹⁴¹ The jailer then complained to Cmdt H Downes that Aurret and a few other ladies with her kept singing, to the tune of John Brown, "We'll hang Maj Downes on a sour apple tree". She was transferred to Graaff-Reinet Gaol where she was so much trouble that she was transferred to the Port Alfred Camp.¹⁴² Lettie Aurret never forgave the British. She was living in the Aberdeen Old Age Home in the 1980s and refused to talk to this researcher because she was English speaking.

The Colonial women were made of sterling stuff, as were many of their Free State and Transvaal counterparts, referred to by Bradford in *Writing a Wider War*. The burning of their house in Steytlerville happened when Norah was ten years old. She remembered her mother's calm front, her dignity when the

¹³⁷ Shute's diary, 7 September 1901; Scheepers Strydom, *Kaapland en die Tweede Vryheidsoorlog*, pp218-220.

¹³⁸ CAR, ZP 21/1/375, Report on the occupation of Maraisburg by CP Vaughan, 11 March 1901.

¹³⁹ CAR, AG 2051, Folio 390, General Index of Alleged Rebels, nd.

¹⁴⁰ CAR, Cd 1364, The Royal Commission into the Revision of Martial Law Cases, pp16-19 and 40-41.

¹⁴¹ NAR, FK 814, Report of Magistrate of Aberdeen, September 1901.

¹⁴² Downes, 'The Idle Memoirs of a Wanderer', Chapter 5, p87.

rebels burst into their house and grabbed all their food. Alice Featherstone was in bed with pleurisy when Piet van der Merwe and his commando appeared and burnt their house down on 5 August 1901 because their father was with the Colonial Forces. Dr Homberg, who had just arrived from Klipplaat to visit, fled terrified he would be forced to ride with the commando. Alice sent a farm worker after the doctor and instructed him to get him safely back to the village on a farm horse they had hidden away. She then got out of bed and pleaded in vain with Van der Merwe not to torch her house. He did agree to remove her furniture first, said Norah. The house was burning when a servant, Old Tina, brought a dish of *poftertjes* - cakes fried in hot fat - and her mother politely offered them to the young rebels to appease them. Scheepers then arrived in a cart - he was kind of fattish looking, said Norah. "They all told Mother and Violet (an older sister) 'Let's shake hands.' So Mother and Violet shook hands with all the officers. Then in a twinkling of an eye they were gone."¹⁴³

Mrs Ryk Dantjie de Villiers of Matoppo House, Beaufort West voiced her protest against the way the British army were running the war in a singular manner. She was an elderly widow of considerable colonial status, with the reception for the Governor, Sir Walter Hely-Hutchinson, being held at her house in February 1902. She owned a stallion that she had raised on a bottle; the consequence being that the horse allowed no one except her to ride it. The stallion was commandeered each time the garrison changed in Beaufort West, but none of the hopeful would-be-riders could stay in the saddle because it bucked so violently. Eventually the 'bottle-fed stallion' would gallop for its stable in the Nieuweveld. A day or so later Mrs De Villiers would leave the village in a cart and return on the stallion at sunset. Walking at a sedate pace and mounted on a sidesaddle, the widow would silently walk the now docile horse around the perimeter of the camp, watched by the crestfallen soldiers. She did it four times; it was a stinging rebuke, but what could they do against an elderly widow who never said a disloyal word?¹⁴⁴

The protests of these women did not achieve very much because their culture did not allow them to do more. However in another time or place it could have been another story. Clearly their potential to have been outstanding rebels, who could have run rings around the British, was there.

Rebels as freebooters in the southern Cape

When Asst Cmdt Piet van der Merwe, in charge of Malan's Commando, reached Molen River in the Langkloof, a farm belonging to Lieut MP Taute of the Taute Scouts who was guarding the Montagu Pass, he allowed his commando to continue their orgy of wanton destruction. They burnt what they could and wasted the rest. Lard and treacle were smeared over the walls of the farmhouse, condensed milk was

¹⁴³ Stucky née Featherstone, Norah, tape recording, property of Marjory Stucky, Graaff-Reinet.

¹⁴⁴ Shearing, 'The Bottle-fed Stallion' in *The Brave Boer Boy and Other Stories*, pp41-43.

poured over the furniture and the bags of meal, sugar and coffee, desperately needed in the weeks ahead, was poured onto the store floor and trampled into the dust.¹⁴⁵ There was no political sense in what they did, and it alienated them from the community who feared the bunch of freebooters.

The 10th Hussars and 12th Lancers caught up with the commando near George on 24 August 1901, and when the first shell exploded, the prisoners walking in front of the horsemen escaped. The Lancers charged the Boers with their swords, killing a young Olwagen, and the commando fled in disorder.¹⁴⁶ Weeks before the Sutherland Scouts heard rumours that Piet van der Merwe was no longer going to trek with Scheepers as he had been invited to join Cmdt Manie Maritz in the northwest Cape.¹⁴⁷ After passing near Montagu Van der Merwe's Commando trekked north towards Ouberg as British intelligence had predicted. A trap was set.

French, at Middelburg, ordered Col Eyre Crabbe, at Colesberg, to intercept Scheepers near Laingsburg, and he travelled by train to Laingsburg and was waiting at Wagondrift hoping to intercept Scheepers. Van der Merwe and Scheepers had separated on 8 September and Van der Merwe was on his own. He had sent his brother Willie to search for a route through the Swartberge near the Seweweekspoort while he waited at Driefontein.¹⁴⁸ Scheepers turned southwest and went his own way; the split in the commando was complete. Malan's old commando of 79 men, now under Van der Merwe, arrived at Driefontein late on 8 September. Frans Naude of Richmond said they were all tired after a long day's ride and said they heard the telltale echoes of guns trundling over the rocks, but they hoped they had given the column the slip.¹⁴⁹ Because the wind was cold most of them slept in the cottages; only the cautious crept in between the rocks and slept outside.¹⁵⁰

Crabbe divided his force, and, with Marshall's Horse, the Prince Alfred Guard and four squadrons of Yeomanry, advanced in two groups and surprised the sleeping commando at dawn; they offered little resistance. Piet van der Merwe was shot through the heart, Pieter van Niekerk of Aberdeen was killed and Sarel du Plessis of Maraisburg died of wounds. Hiding in the cottages were 37 rebels, who all surrendered, but between them only twenty rifles and 1,000 rounds of ammunition were collected up. There was very little food.¹⁵¹ Frans Naude, Johannes Smith, Tom du Plessis and others escaped and, led by Henry van Rensburg, walked to Calvinia.¹⁵² Five coloured grooms were captured with the commando, including Jan Aanhuizen of Ladismith who had been captured by the commando and turned out to be a British scout,

¹⁴⁵ Taute, 'The Taute Papers', unpublished, private archives of Mrs Daisy Taute, George.

¹⁴⁶ Smith, *Ek Rebbeleer*, pp53-5; *George and Knysna Herald*, 2 October 1901.

¹⁴⁷ NAR, FK 814, Weekly Intelligence Reports.

¹⁴⁸ NAR, FK 2107 to 2114, documents found on those captured or killed.

¹⁴⁹ Pers com, Mr MM de Villiers of Somerset West said Mr Naude gripped his wrist as he remembered the event, saying it was a most frightening experience.

¹⁵⁰ Smith, *Ek Rebbeleer*, p67.

¹⁵¹ *Cape Argus*, 11 September 1901.

¹⁵² Smith, *Ek Rebelleer*, p73.

who was released in Laingsburg.¹⁵³ Van der Merwe had failed to put out sentries.¹⁵⁴ They had been living from hand to mouth and had virtually run out of food. The fatal flaw of many of these young rebels was that they really lived and died for the day only. They had wasted valuable condensed milk, so easily portable, at Mill River, George and now they had paid the price when they were too tired and hungry to go on.

Burning houses and reprisals on civilians

While the Boer forces understandably had long memories for their houses that were burnt down in the Free State during the war, the burning of houses and other reprisals by rebels against loyal colonists was not a popular topic for the few rebel memoirs that do exist. According to a survey conducted by the Attorney General in November 1901 36 houses were burnt down in the Cape Colony.¹⁵⁵ Groenewald did not mention that the rebels burnt down seventeen farmhouses in the Vryburg district, and that he and his brothers were among the rebels in Van Zyl's Commando that burnt down the Groot Gewacht farmhouse at Setlagoli, Mafeking at the end of August 1901. Van Zyl allowed Maria Smith, who lived in the farmhouse with and her younger children, ten minutes to remove their bed and bedding out of the house. This was probably a reprisal as her husband and older sons served in Keeley's Special Police.¹⁵⁶

Cmdt Fouché controlled the civilian population through a system of fines. According to a report. Fouché was described as stern looking and spoke in a civil manner, but had an air of long accustomed and immovable command. He took what sheep he wanted and food from the house. Before he left with a commando of 140 men, he warned the family that if they sent a native to report his visit he would be shot and they would be fined £50.¹⁵⁷ In July 1901 JNP Botha, the MLA for Aliwal North, was thrashed by Fouché's men and his house mostly destroyed, he also fined the Botha brothers £200 and when they had no cash on hand he accepted a security from another farmer, JB Marais. He returned in October, threatening Marais who managed to borrow the money and pay the fine.¹⁵⁸

In the Burghersdorp district Fouché's commando flogged and fined F Muller £25, Grobbelaar was fined £50 and his oxen and wagon confiscated, Hans Lubbe and L de Klerk were both fined £50.¹⁵⁹ In many cases the rebels knew the farmers on whom reprisals were affected personally, and sometimes they

¹⁵³ CAR, AG 3558, A note 'Released British Scout' appears in red ink next to his name.

¹⁵⁴ Pers com, Mr MM de Villiers of Somerset West interviewed Frans Naude in 1960s.

¹⁵⁵ CAR, Cd 903, Further correspondence relating to South Africa, Condition of districts, November 1901, pp 144-160.

¹⁵⁶ CAR, AG 2038, Folio 5, Burning of houses in Setlagoli, 14 September 1901; CAR, Cd 983, Further correspondence relating to South Africa, Conditions of Districts, November 1901.

¹⁵⁷ *SA News Weekly*, 16 November 1901, 'Trials of a loyalist farmer'.

¹⁵⁸ *Oudtshoorn Courant*, 21 October 1901, 'Visited by Commando'.

¹⁵⁹ CAR, Cd 903, Enclosure 4 of No 59, Statement by E Hughes, November 1901.

were members of their own family. Cmdt D Schoeman was a member of Myburgh's commando when they looted and destroyed NPJ Venter's farm Haartebeestvlei in Wodehouse in August 1901; after the war Venter stated at the Preliminary Investigation of Schoeman into charges of High Treason that Schoeman was his brother-in-law.¹⁶⁰ It is really doubtful if such breaches of family trust ever really healed, and certainly not in that generation.

To many people in Graaff-Reinet the brutal treatment meted out to Peter Booysen by Carel van Heerden epitomised the awfulness of the war and the kind of thing that happened when the commandos held sway. In April 1902 a party of 30 rebels had taken Booysen of Mooifontein by force from his farm near Aberdeen to Van Heerden, who had returned to the Camdeboo with General Malan and Cmdt Fouché. Van Heerden told Booysen that because of his evidence Scheepers had been executed. Booysen protested that there were too many counts against Scheepers for his evidence alone to result in a guilty verdict. Van Heerden refused to listen, and forced the farmer onto his stomach and beat him until he was unconscious. Although he was very badly injured his wife drove him to the outposts at Graaff-Reinet to get a doctor. The Town Guards took one look and ran to the Rev Charles Murray who, when he saw the condition of his brother-in-law, got permission from the military to open the gates. Booysen was ill for a considerable time and consequently when Carel van Heerden, known as the 'Notorious Rebel', was killed at the end of May 1902, many people in Graaff-Reinet openly rejoiced, as Van Heerden had been greatly feared.¹⁶¹

Lambert Colyn: a rebel with a price

Lemeul Colyn of Afgunst, Piketberg was a hanger-on in the outskirts of the Smuts Commando and known to Theron's Commando as *Oom Willie*. Colyn's son Piet was also a rebel in Maritz's Commando. Consequently when Colyn snr approached Cmdt Ben Bouwer and asked to join his commando near Van Rhynsdorp on 10 February 1902, he was accepted as a matter of course. None of the Boers, apparently not even his son, was aware that Colyn had been recruited by Lieut-Col CM Kavanagh of the 10th Hussars to betray the whereabouts of Bouwer's Commando.

Colyn, who had been instructed by Kavanagh to spend a week with Bouwer's Commando, had joined the Boers when the commando divided into three detachments and advanced from the vicinity of Van Rhynsdorp to a new position along the Olifants River, as they planned to harass the Clanwilliam garrison. Bouwer, with V/C Peter Visser, was camped at Krantz on the Olifant's River. In the early hours

¹⁶⁰ CAR, AG 3421, Preliminary Investigation into charges of High Treason, July 1902.

¹⁶¹ *Graaff-Reinet Advertiser*, 17 April 1902; Pers com, Mrs Beth Minnaar of Graaff Reinet. Booysen was one of three Graaff-Reinet Guides who gave evidence about events that occurred when they were prisoners of Scheepers in March 1901.

a picket under Cpl Meiert Avis told Bouwer that he could hear a mounted force approaching. When Bouwer warned his men they discovered that Colyn was missing and what appeared to be a sleeping form was in reality a blanket roll. They knew they had been betrayed.

Cmdt Bouwer escaped, but ten of his officers were captured and because the Hussars wielded sabres the sounds did not carry and the rest of the Boers nearby did not come to their aid. Bouwer regrouped and began hunting for Colyn, determined to punish him for his treachery. Their chance came when the Boers captured the Windhoek farmhouse on the Clanwilliam road. The fight between the Cape Police and the Boer forces had been hard fought; both suffered casualties of four killed or died of wounds. The most severely wounded was Gen Jaap van Deventer who had collapsed with a bullet through his throat, jaw and tongue. After the police had surrendered, Colyn was discovered in front of the fire in the Windhoek kitchen.

Gen Smuts convened a court martial at Aties the following day, 25 February 1902. Other members of the Court were Cmdt L Boschhoff, V/C C Brink and C van der Westhuizen. Colyn made a full confession in which he admitted that he had joined the commando with the intention of spying on them and reporting their whereabouts. He detailed the places he had visited and gave the names of the people who interviewed him. He stated that he slipped away from the commando and told a man called Bennet where the Boers were camping. The confession does not mention what reward he was to be paid for the information or what benefits he was promised. Neither is there any reference to a reward being paid out.

A document by Cmdt Bouwer was included with the confession. Bouwer stated that Colyn informed him that he joined the Boers because the British suspected him of being a spy, and he pitied Colyn because the British had nearly apprehended him. The verdict, signed by Gen Smuts, said that Lambert Colyn was unanimously found guilty of espionage, and that he was condemned to death by shooting on 25 February 1902. The execution took place a few hours later.¹⁶² His son Piet remained on commando and laid down arms at Clanwilliam at the end of the war, which seems to imply that he was too frightened of Smuts to complain about his father's execution or that the facts spoke for themselves.¹⁶³

This was certainly not the first execution of renegade Boers. De la Rey had ordered the capture of a National Scout patrol near Ventersdorp, and, after a hearing, P de Bruin and JAB de Beer were executed near Lapfontein on 27 December 1900. But it appears that Colyn was the first white Cape colonist to be executed by Boer forces. Colyn was a spy, that is clear, but was he a rebel? Smuts, who was president of the Court that tried him in 'The State versus Lambert Colyn' was clearly aware that the execution might prove controversial as nobody had addressed the Court in Colyn's defence, nor in mitigation of sentence.

¹⁶² NAR, Smuts Papers, A1, Vol C1, Notebook c of 1902, item 41, 'Trial of Lambert Colyn'.

¹⁶³ CAR, AG 2116, sentenced under Proclamation 100 of 1902 at Clanwilliam.

The Transvaal was a state in name only, and it was probably Smuts who insisted on the precaution that the names of the execution squad remain secret, as they have never been revealed.¹⁶⁴

Thirty years later when Denys Reitz published 'Commando' he omitted to mention that Colyn had had a trial because, as the text read, it seemed that Smuts had ordered Colyn to be executed without due process. The controversy that arose from the matter appeared to have more to do with the quarrels between the various political parties in the 1930s than the South African War.¹⁶⁵

Scheepers, the failing Commandant

The treatment for wounds on commando was rough and ready, but amazingly effective. Peelings from the wild onion or honey made an excellent dressing and the wounds healed cleanly. However there were certain types of illnesses that remained a mystery and have not been totally unravelled to this day.

As Cmdt Gideon Scheepers got weaker his commando dwindled away; the men didn't want to be captured like Van der Merwe near Laingsburg. During September, Hermanus van der Westhuizen said they trekked endlessly, fleeing from the British. At dusk Scheepers, who almost never spoke, would mostly lie huddled in a cart with a blanket over his head. At sunset he would signal the commando to stop. The men would find a sheltered spot and he would lie curled up while they hurriedly cooked meat on the coals. One of the youngsters would be sent to watch him, and if he saw Scheepers crack his knuckles they knew he would shortly jump up and start pacing up and down. Once he started pacing about he would soon blow his whistle, climb back into the cart and signal to his driver. The pair would vanish into the darkness, leaving the commando to follow. Hans Steyl of Willowmore later told his son, "Riding with Scheepers was ghastly. Most of the time you sucked mud for water." They would snatch the half raw meat from the coals and eat it as they chased after the cart in the darkness, with the khakis always half a day's gallop behind them.¹⁶⁶ Some of them still believed that he reviewed the day and they were safe if they stayed with him. Others who had their doubts slipped away.

Gideon Scheepers, a sick man exhibiting classic symptoms of war trauma, was now a very far cry from the fighter *par excellence* of 1900 who had slipped into legend. After he surrendered to the British at Koppiesfontein near Prince Albert on 10 October, the commando was harshly criticised for allowing it to happen. Joseph Erasmus told Leboef du Plessis and the few Free Staters left with the commando that they should have hidden him in the mountains until he died or recovered, and not let him get into the hands of

¹⁶⁴ Shearing, *General Jan Smuts and his Long Ride*, p174.

¹⁶⁵ Denys Reits, *Commando, a Boer Journal of the Boer War*, p293.

¹⁶⁶ Pers com, Hermanus van der Westhuizen of Prince Albert, as told to his son.

the British.¹⁶⁷ In all fairness to his commando they had been carrying a sick man around for at least six weeks, and many were convinced that he was dying.¹⁶⁸

There has been much speculation over the mysterious illness that forced Cmdt Gideon Scheepers to surrender. Recently Constantine published a theory that a supposed traitor, DA Hugo, a brother of Judge Henry Hugo, had given Scheepers and his adjutant Karel Lempkuhl poisoned wine on 21 September 1901 in the Oudtshoorn district.¹⁶⁹ However Daniel Sarel Hugo of Lusthof Smithfield was captured on 20 September 1901 near Aliwal North, the day before the alleged poisoning, and as POW 22852 was sent to a prisoner-of-war camp in India. Scheepers and his adjutant might well have been given poisoned wine by somebody else whose surname was Hugo, except that Lempkuhl was probably speculating as he originally said his Commandant had been fed ground glass.

The first statement about Scheepers from the British was in a telegram, reading "Scheepers captured at Kopjeskraal, move accompanied by a doctor to Matjesfontein. Taken in a 1st Class compartment. Dangerously ill and extremely depressed." Nine days later a second statement appeared in the Beaufort Courier, "Scheepers is in custody in Beaufort West and has quite recovered his health. His recent illness was not as severe as first thought."¹⁷⁰

After numerous reports from doctors and visits from Army Officers, and even one from Gen French himself, it was decided that Scheepers was fit enough to stand trial. In that era the diagnosis of war trauma was still unknown. Bercu states that traumatised people suffer reoccurring distressing dreams and have broken sleeping patterns. Huddling under a blanket was their way of creating a dark place in order to get some sleep.¹⁷¹

The treatment or understanding of Gideon Scheepers' condition was then unknown, and the knowledge of how to contain epidemics like the killer measles and typhoid epidemics was not fully understood. Many men on both sides of the war would die from wounds then quite untreatable. So it was with Daniel Egbert de Wet, the son of Rev HG de Wet of Alexandria, who ran away from school at Graaff-Reinet and joined Kritzinger's Commando in March 1901. The only letter his parents received said it was going well. Then a letter arrived from a British doctor who formally informed them in April 1902 that their son was a patient in the Danielskuil Hospital. When they arrived they barely recognised him; he was now thin and pain-racked, paralysed by a bullet wound in the spine.

¹⁶⁷ Joseph Erasmus, 'Wedevaringe van Joseph Erasmus', private archives of Pieter Erasmus.

¹⁶⁸ Pers com, Jan Pieterse of Okkertskraal, Ladismith from his father who was kidnapped by the Boers.

¹⁶⁹ R Constantine, *The poisoning of Gideon Scheepers*, p17; FAR, SO/ POW, Prisoners-of-War in the Cape and Natal, 20 September 1901.

¹⁷⁰ *Grocott's Penny Mail*, 23 October 1901; *Beaufort Courier*, 28 October 1901; Shearing, *Commandant Gideon Scheepers and the Search for his Grave*, pp144-148.

¹⁷¹ Bercu, Dr Silvia, 'Psychological Consequences of War', April 1999.

De Wet said he became Gen De Villiers' secretary and had survived a year on commando unscathed. Sometime in March 1902 the Boers attacked a strong convoy between Kimberley and Danielskuil. De Wet said that by this time they were all very tired and the men had started to hesitate; consequently when the General ordered them to charge, he raced forward alone. The General shouted again and two other rebels went to help him, but they came under such heavy fire that they swung their horses round and were racing for cover when he was hit in the back.

He found himself sliding off his horse onto the ground and could not get up. His comrades hurriedly dismounted, took his rifle and despatch box and then put his hat over his face, signalling that he was wounded, and galloped away. The soldiers had to get an ambulance, which took a long time to come, but they took him to the hospital where he was nursed, although he suffered terribly.

The Doctor told his parents that they could take him home, as he needed special care. In the wagon they examined the wound and discovered a huge hole with a vertebra exposed. It was a terrible journey as Daniel screamed and moaned continuously in the lurching ox-wagon. Mercifully he slipped into a coma and died near Smidtsdrift on 27 July 1902. The Rev De Wet said afterwards that it was bitter to have lost their beloved, most promising son. He had joined the rebels not only for adventure, but also out of duty to his kinsmen. His companions called him brave, faithful and helpful, and said he never slept before he had prayed for them all. His remains were later re-interred at Worcester.¹⁷²

A lifetime's burden

When the war was over a myth arose that the veterans went home, picked up their lives and let go of the past. Nothing could be further from the truth. For some the scars of war became a lifetime's burden. Marthinus Jooste of Carnarvon told this researcher that as his old father, Jacobus Johannes Jooste lay dying, he told his astonished family he hoped that God would understand how sorry he was about killing the "klein Engelsmannetjie." He did not know what made him do it.

Jacobus explained to his children that he and his twin brother had joined Johannes Smith's Commando in August 1901, and that shortly after that his brother Marthinus was killed. He was captured in the Oudekloof near Fraserburg in January 1902. A cheerful young Private G Withers was ordered to escort him to Fraserburg, but when they reached the top of the pass he said he took a chance and decided to escape. As he was galloping away Withers, who was behind him, fired and the bullet smashed a bottle of *Rooi Lavental* he carried in his knapsack. The medicine leaked out, wetting the bag and he collapsed over the saddle, stunned by the impact of the bullet, although he was not wounded.

¹⁷² Rev HG de Wet, Letter in family archive of Dr Tertius Weich, Swellendam, nd. A portrait of Daniel de Wet is with the papers. In the South African War all cases of spinal paralysis were inevitably fatal.

Then he heard Withers' shout, "He's hit!" The Tommy raced up, and, as Jooste explained to his son, before he could stop himself, he had knifed the soldier in the neck. He severed the jugular vein and although he tried to stop the bleeding, the Tommy bled to death before his horrified eyes. Stunned by what he had done, Jooste hid Withers' body under the bushes, took his horse and escaped along the Loxton road. For a while he was glad, he explained, that he had escaped capture; and then his conscience began to trouble him. But he was only 21 and too scared to tell anybody.

As a result every day for the rest of his life he had blamed himself for the wrong he had done. And so the laughing Tommy stayed with him all his life - always young, as he grew old, said Jooste. After they laid down arms their older brother returned from commando so silent that they thought the death of his twin had changed him, remembered Marthinus' old aunt. Jacobus Jooste's story came out in dribs and drabs and he died peacefully in his sleep a few days later.

When they laid him to rest his family was still stunned by the news of the terrible burden their father had carried, so silently and so long. After the funeral, some of them went to the Fraserburg graveyard and walked along the row of black crosses until they found the plaque over the grave of Private G Withers of the 3rd Battalion, South Stafford Regiment, killed near Fraserburg 16 January 1902. "My brother," said Marthinus, "spoke for us all when he said quietly that the Boer War was over so long ago, but only now did he understand what war could do."¹⁷³

¹⁷³ Shearing, *The Brave Boer Boy and Other Stories*, pp117-8.

CHAPTER 6

THE REBEL LOSES HIS FREEDOM

The Cape rebel lost his freedom during the South-African War in many ways. Some paid the ultimate penalty and were executed, others became prisoners-of-war in the Cape Colony, Natal, India, Ceylon, St Helena or Bermuda; or languished in gaols at Kimberley, Grahamstown or Tokai or any other of the many gaols of the Cape Colony. Rebels were internees in Portugal, or were refugees in The Netherlands. While being processed through the colonial legal system as political prisoners they were allowed to wear their own clothes. Once the military took over the courts in 1901, the rebel sentenced to penal servitude on Bermuda wore a convict's jacket with a broad arrow painted down the back.¹

Prisoner-of-War in British hands

About 439 Cape rebels were captured under arms between the Battle of Modder River in 1899 and April 1901 when the Military took over the Courts. Initially they were sent to POW camps with prisoners-of-war from the Boer Republics, and were dealt with under the provisions of the Hague Convention.² This Convention, with respect to the Laws and Customs of War on Land, had been held in July 1899 and embodied the principles of the Geneva Convention of 1864. Sixteen articles dealt specifically with the humane treatment of prisoners-of-war.³ It can be assumed that until the Military Courts handed down verdicts that altered the status of the Cape Rebel that prisoners-of-war were treated uniformly.

Accounts by rebel prisoners-of-war during the first period are sparse. Petrus Casparas Snyders of Snydersrust, Barkly West, who joined Tollie de Beer's Commando at Kimberley together with his father, Christoffel Frans Snyders, and his brother, Daniel Johannes Snyders, were among the Griqualand West rebels who fought at Modder River and at Magersfontein. The Snyders brothers were captured at Paardeberg. They had wanted to join Gen De la Rey's expedition to Colesberg with their father, but were turned down because their horses were too weak. As the British forces pressed home the attack they feared retribution and planned to break out from the laager, but they left it too

¹ Colin H Benbow, *Boer Prisoners of War on Bermuda*, photographs, p7.

² FAR, SO/POW files; CAR, AG 3558, Register of Rebels who are POWs.

late. Petrus and Daniel Snyders and 122 rebels, all from north of the Orange River, surrendered to the British. They did not receive adverse treatment however, and were given food and water like the other POWs during their three-day walk to Modder River Station. Schalk Willem Lubbe of Klipdam, Barkly West tried to escape, but was soon recaptured, and apparently not punished for running away.⁴

The prisoners were transported in open railway trucks to Cape Town and then housed in transports in the Cape Town harbour on the *Harlech Castle*, *Manilla*, *Mongolian*, *Orient* and *Pindara*. While prisoner-of-war camps were being organized some of the wounded were nursed ashore and others on the hospital ship '*Spartan*'.⁵ The rebels were then moved ashore to the Greenpoint Camp and Bellevue, Simon's Town.

The Greenpoint Camp lay at the foot of Lions Head, two miles (three kms) from Cape Town. A seven-strand barbed wire fence was erected around the camp; inside the cycle track and the pavilions, as opposed to the hospital and rows of tents, were a reminder of its former sporting function. The first prisoners-of-war were admitted to Bellevue Camp on 28 February 1900, and 2,300 Boers were housed there in the first nine months of its existence.⁶

Regulations governing Prisoners-of-War

Because prisoners were held under duress, the regulations of the camp warned that any attempt at mutiny or organised disturbance would be put down by force of arms; any man attempting to escape would be fired upon; prisoners were to obey the orders of the guards and sentries under penalty of being fired upon; prisoners were not allowed to lean against or congregate near the wire entanglements. In order to check that no escapes had taken place, roll call was held twice daily, and people giving the wrong names were heavily punished. If there was an escape, or attempted escape, all the men from the line of tents involved would be placed in a Military prison for safe custody. The day-to-day discipline of the prisoners-of-war was left in the hands of their own senior men: a tent foreman was nominated from the men in the tent, and he was held responsible for the good behaviour of the men. The tent foremen chose the line captain, and he had to report anything unusual or any complaints to the Camp Commandant. The Boer Officers selected their own Captain. The line captains nominated foremen to supervise the kitchens, the washhouses and the cleaning of the urinals and were responsible for the sections under their control. The Camp Commandant had the power to

³ *The Laws and Customs of War on Land (Hague I)*, pp1-8; Barclay, 'Laws of War', *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, pp750, 751, 755.

⁴ Ackerman, *Opsaal*, p33; CAR, AG 2116, Lists of Persons convicted of High Treason under Proclamation 100 of 1902, Christoffel Frans Snyders laid down arms at Hay; FAR, SO/POW files, Prisoners of War in the Cape and Natal, Schalk Willem Johannes Jacobus Lubbe of Danielskuil, POW 1398.

⁵ *The Anglo-Boer War Philatelic Society, Publication No 1, The Anglo-Boer War 1899-1902, Philately of the Boer and British Prisoner of War Camps, Part A, Prisoner of War Camps in South Africa and the Burgher Camps*, p20; Van Schoor, *Die Bannelinge*, p1, states POWs were also housed on the *Catalonia* in Simon's Bay.

inflict imprisonment of fourteen days, with or without hard labour. More serious crimes fell under the jurisdiction of Civil or Martial Law Courts that had the power to inflict the death penalty or penal servitude for any length of time.⁷ In September 1900 the British announced that all burghers taken in arms were to be treated as Prisoners-of-War, and would be deported to St Helena or Ceylon. Burghers who surrendered voluntarily were housed in camps in the Cape or Natal.⁸

The days were long at Bellevue Camp at Simon's Town in 1900. Apart from prayer meetings, planning concerts and swimming, time hung heavily on their hands. Petrus Snyders who had worked on the diggings, joined the tunnellers, determined to escape. The tunnel was discovered three months later when an astonished officer asleep in a tent overheard the miners arguing directly under his bed whether or not the tunnel was long enough.⁹ Snyders, together with other would-be escapees, were moved back to the transports for the next six months. In the meanwhile Boer prisoners-of-war were being captured at an average rate of 1,000 a month, and further camps were constructed to house these prisoners in St Helena, India and Ceylon.

Camps on St Helena, India and Ceylon

The first prisoner-of-war camp abroad was opened on St Helena at Deadwood, five miles (eight kms) from the main town, Jamestown, on 5 April 1900. This camp was first divided into Deadwood 1 and 2, known as the Peace Camp, to stop the quarrelling between the prisoners who were prepared to accept British citizenship and those who wanted to remain republicans. Then further disputes between the Transvalers and Free Staters, each blaming the other for their capture, led to them being split up, and the Free Staters were moved to Broadbottom, five miles (eight kms) from Deadwood, at the end of 1900.¹⁰ It is unclear if the 58 Cape rebels on St Helena were involved in these quarrels, or even in which camp they were housed. Johannes Petrus van der Berg of Ruigtefontein, Barkly West died of pneumonia shortly after arrival on 28 April 1900, and was buried at Knollcombe cemetery.¹¹

The rebels and burghers captured at Paardeberg had been prisoners-of-war for over a year before they sailed for India from Durban; and 500 men landed at Bombay after a voyage of 21 days in April 1901 - among them were about 131 Cape rebels. They were sent to the main prisoner-of-war camp in India and arrived on 23 April 1901 at Ahmednagar. There were smaller camps at Abbottabad,

⁶ Ackerman, *Opsaal*, p343; *The Anglo-Boer War Philatelic Society, Publication No 1, Part A*, pp21-22.

⁷ Wilson, Major A, Chief Staff Officer, Bermuda, *Regulations for the discipline of the Boer Prisoner of War*, SA National Museum of Military History, C264.

⁸ Carver, *The Boer War*, pp177-178.

⁹ *Grocott's Daily Mail Weekly War Summary*, 6 June 1900

¹⁰ *The Anglo-Boer War Philatelic Society, Publication No 2, The Anglo-Boer War 1899-1902, Philately of the Boer and British Prisoner of War Camps, Part B, Prisoner of War Camps Overseas*, p54.

¹¹ Van Schoor, *Die Bannelinge*, p14.

Bellary, Bhim Tal, Trinchinopoly, Umballa, Dagshai, Solon, Kaity-Nilgiris, Satara, Shahjahanpur, Sialkot, and Upper Topa. Agitators were held at Amritsar, or Fort Govindgarh.¹² Petrus Snyders did not mention the name of the camp in which he was held, and only commented that the place was well guarded, although a couple of Hollanders got away and returned home.¹³ Prisoner-of-war diaries, including one by CP van der Merwe, a Free Stater at Shahjahanpur during 1902, were consulted, but they did not mention the rebels apart from stating that there were some on parole at Bhim Tal, and that the Camp Commandant stated that no burgher would return to South Africa without signing the oath of allegiance and Colonial rebels would return as convicts.¹⁴ After their return to the Cape Colony they were charged with High Treason under the Indemnity and Special Tribunals Act 6 of 1900. Jacobus Johannes Snyman of Tweefontein, Herbert died at Kakul of kidney failure on 26 July 1902, and Cornelius Petrus de Jongh of Wintersrus, Barkly West also died at Jhansi on 2 June 1902 of heatstroke.¹⁵

A prisoner-of-war camp system was extended to Ceylon to Diyatalawa on 9 August 1900 and housed about 5,000 Boer prisoners. A group of smaller stations opened at Hambantoto and Urugasmanhandiva, included Mount Lavinia for convalescents, the old and the feeble, and Ragama Camp for the dissidents.¹⁶ The rebels captured at Bothaville were among the 130 rebels on Ceylon, and included Francois Nicolaas Joubert of Hebron West, Colesberg,¹⁷ his letter of 16 January 1903, from the Roeland Street Gaol, Cape Town has survived. He told his wife in Colesberg that he had arrived back on the 'SS *Ionian*' on 6 January 1903, and he hoped it would not be long before they could go home.¹⁸

Cape rebels sentenced to penal servitude after 21 April 1901 were not shipped to Ceylon or India. All rebel prisoners-of-war shipped abroad, whether to the east or St Helena or Bermuda, captured prior to this date, were charged with High Treason in the colonial courts on their return. This also applied to those who were interned in Portugal or were refugees in Holland. For all the loneliness and the bitterness about the defeat of the Boer forces, when the diaries and photographs of the prisoners-of-war are examined, many made good use of their time if the choirs, concerts, handiwork, the athletics meetings and improvement clubs are anything to go by.

¹² Ackerman, *Opsaal*, p343; *The Anglo-Boer War Philatelic Society, Publication No 2, Part B*, pp35-36.

¹³ Ackerman, *Opsaal*, p343.

¹⁴ CP Van der Merwe, 'Joernaal van my Krysgevangenskap, April 1902-February 1903', unpublished, private archives of Mrs Gonda Ennes, George, p47.

¹⁵ Van Schoor, *Die Bannelinge*, pp10-11.

¹⁶ *The Anglo-Boer War Philatelic Society, Publication No 2, Part B*, p17.

¹⁷ FAR, SO/POW, Prisoners of War in the Cape and Natal. Joubert's POW number was 15280.

¹⁸ War Museum of the Boer Republics, Bloemfontein, 4305/62, FN Joubert's letters to his wife, 16 January 1903; CAR, AG 2117, List of persons convicted of High Treason under Act 6 of 1900.

Interned in Portugal

During March 1901 burghers and rebels interned in Mozambique were transported to Portugal. Among the 1064 internees on the *Benguella*, *Zaire* and *Alfonso de Albuquerque* were 153 people from the Cape Colony, and of these 81 were Cape rebels; fifteen were married with families, who settled in married quarters at Caldas da Rainha and also hired small houses nearby. About 25 single men were housed at Peniche, and 47 at Alcobaça. The Portuguese treated them sympathetically, and the Cape rebel was on equal terms with the burghers; senior rebels such as Cmdt Jacobus Gustav van Aardt, Johannes Marthinus de Wet and Jan Nel, all of Aliwal North, were regarded as officers. Senior rebels who held positions on the Church Councils during their internment included Petrus Willem Kruger of Dordrecht, Samuel Zacharius Pretorius of Vryburg and Christian Johannes van der Walt of Haasfontein, Colesberg. The Chairman of the Christian Students Fellowship was Johannes Hermanus van Antwerpen of Kleinkareepan, Kimberley and his secretary was Barend Swart of Colesberg.¹⁹

Shortly after arriving in Portugal, a trickle of men, mainly Europeans, absconded. Eight months later Johannes Christian Buys of Van der Merwesfontein, Wodehouse, Daniel Nicholas Venter of Hanover and Hendrik Wilhelmus Theron and three burghers living at Peniche absconded. They travelled to The Netherlands via Madrid, Bordeaux and Paris to Weesp where a committee became responsible for them.²⁰ Andries Francois Nel of Vryburg also absconded from Alcobaça in January 1902. They would all surrender later to the British Consul in The Netherlands in July 1902.²¹

The news that the Peace of Vereeniging had been signed on 31 May 1902 was received among the internees with trepidation. The rebel officers were anxious about their future, and felt that the Boer leaders had left them in the lurch.²² However Cmdt Gustav van Aardt who had applied to the authorities for permission to go sightseeing in Europe left of his own accord after permission was refused.²³ The internees returned on SS *Bavarian* on 19 July 1902, landed in Cape Town on 5 August and were detained at Bellevue camp for a fortnight while the Magistrate held 283 preliminary hearings into charge of High Treason. In the meanwhile the families with sufficient funds went home by train.²⁴ The families of indigent rebels disembarked from the SS *Bavarian* at Port Elizabeth, and were housed at a camp in the town. The British authorities funded their train tickets, and eight women and fifteen children left at the end of August 1902 in groups for Colesberg, Burghersdorp, Aliwal

¹⁹ Ferreira, *Viva Os Boers!*, pp275-91.

²⁰ Ferreira, *Viva Os Boers!*, p147.

²¹ CAR, AG 2117, List of persons convicted of High Treason under Act 6 of 1900; CAR AG 2092 List of men who surrendered to the British Consul in The Netherlands on 11 July 1902.

²² Ferreira, *Viva Os Boers!*, p231.

²³ Ferreira, *Viva Os Boers!*, pp205-06.

²⁴ Ferreira, *Viva Os Boers!*, pp238-40.

North and Norvalspont.²⁵ Andries Schalk Willem Brits of Vryburg died at Alcobaça on 23 May 1902, and Johannes Christoffel Nel, address only Cape Colony, died in hospital in Lisbon on 22 July 1902 after the SS *Bavarian* sailed.²⁶

Ferreira points out rightly that the internees lived in better conditions in Portugal than any Republican or rebel prisoners-of-war held in camps abroad. They were housed in decently constructed buildings - formerly convents, forts and hospitals - that were a far cry from the overcrowded tents and tin shanties used by many other prisoners-of-war. Despite their complaints, their food was superior to that of many others, and they were relatively free as internees too. Their greatest hardship was uncertainty and apparently boredom.²⁷

These rebels all came from rural backgrounds where many lived isolated lives, so it is hardly surprising that some of them failed to adjust to a foreign land and culture. Some became bored and landed up in trouble, drunk and disorderly. Among the twenty internees who were gaoled for some time at Fort de Sao Juliao de Barre Oeiras were four rebels, Franciscus Johannes Diffenthal, Pieter Hendrik Henning, Francois Joubert and Stephanus Pienaar. Sport was popular especially cricket, and a game took place at Caldas de Rainha between the Transvalers and the Cape Colonists, who lost the match. The internees also played rugby football, which fascinated the Portuguese who were new to the game. Others took a great deal of interest in local farming, and especially in the shrubs planted for wind protection to prevent damage from shore winds. They hired donkeys, went on excursions and explored and visited family and friends interned elsewhere. Most of the time they could be seen wandering up and down the streets or standing around in groups chatting.²⁸ However they dealt with it, the reality was that the Cape rebel interned in Portugal appears to have had an easy time during the South African War.

Refugees in The Netherlands

About 50 rebels from the Cape and Natal arrived in Amsterdam as refugees in the middle of 1900. The Transvaal Government clearly felt responsible for their plight as they had paid their passage money, and Dr WJ Leyds, President Kruger's envoy in Brussels, wrote to Mr A Snethlage, Transvaal Consul General in Amsterdam, "We must use what money the Republic has to help these people, as we cannot allow them to be thrown into the street".²⁹ They were boarded in the 'Afrikaner Tehuis' at 143 Nieuwe Heerengracht, Amsterdam under the auspices of the *Christelijk Boerencomite*,

²⁵ Jan Jacobus, Roodt 'Die Port Elizabethse Konsentrasiekamp 1899-1902', unpublished dissertation for the degree of Master of Arts, University of Port Elizabeth, 1990, p292.

²⁶ Ferreira, *Viva Os Boers!*, p242.

²⁷ Ferreira, *Viva Os Boers!*, pp251-59.

²⁸ Ferreira, *Viva Os Boers!*, pp162-163, 189, 278,280.

and were supported by funds from President Kruger.³⁰ The first group, J Oosthuysen, P, C, and J van der Westhuysen and Lukas P Steenekamp, arrived with a letter of introduction from the Transvaal State Secretary, FW Reitz.³¹ Jotham Joubert, MLA for Albert, and Ignatius van der Walt, MLA for Colesberg, arrived in July 1900. Joubert's loose assets had been sold on 28 June 1900 on his farm Rietfontein, Albert to defray his debts.³² The two politicians lost their seats in Parliament after Sprigg sent an agent who persuaded them to sign admissions that they had failed to attend Parliament during the 1900 session.³³ With them was JD du Toit of Kleinbos, Dal Josaphat, known as the Poet Totius, who fled on the *Bundesrath* to The Netherlands spent the remainder of the war studying theology.³⁴

Political prisoners in the Cape Colony

In the Cape Colony legislation had been passed in 1858 that led to the extension of public prisons.³⁵ Virtually every small village with a Magistrate's Court had its local gaol or lock-up. They were all built to the same basic design; stone buildings with high walls, long narrow passages with exercise yards inside the building. The only difference between prisons in Kimberley, Graaff-Reinet and Fraserburg, for instance, was the size and scale of the structure. They had not been constructed with a large-scale rebellion in mind, and from March 1900 to as late as the end of 1903 overcrowding in the gaols remained a chronic problem.³⁶

The chief gaol for Class 1 prisoners was the Tokai Convict Station in Cape Town, formerly an outstation of the Breakwater Prison. In 1899 this convict station, intended for the chronically ill, had been erected at Tokai, and this new building was used to house the political prisoners.³⁷ According to the Tokai Gaol register 225 out of 473 convicted Class 1 rebels served time in Tokai Gaol as political prisoners. Seven others sentenced to hard labour were confined at the Breakwater Convict Station. The remainder served time mainly at Kimberley and Grahamstown. In 1903 343 prisoners, who had returned from St Helena and Bermuda, were also held at Tokai until a partial amnesty was granted on 21 March 1903. They had all been permanently disfranchised when they were sentenced.

²⁹ Leyds, Dr WJ, *Derde Verzameling (Correspondentie 1900)*, Deel I, (Als manuscript gedrukt), Letter 209, p208. Translation of 'de heeren moeten Geholpen worded en kunnen door ons niet op straat worden gelaten'.

³⁰ Leyds, Dr WJ, *Derde Verzameling (Correspondentie 1900)*, Deel II, (Als manuscript gedrukt), p79, Memoranda by HJ Emous.

³¹ Leyds, *Derde Verzameling*, I, Letter 209, p207.

³² Cape of Good Hope, *Government Gazette*, 19 June 1900, pp1026-1027, 'Sale: District of Albert'; Leyds, *Derde Verzameling*, I, Letter 209, p207.

³³ Cape of Good Hope, *Debates in the House of Assembly 1902*, pp16, 19 and 228; CAR, PMO 1045, Despatches received from Agent General to Sprigg, 30 August 1902.

³⁴ Prof VE D'Assonville, 'Kaapse Rebel Totius veg met Boere by Magersfontein', in Van Bart en Scholtz (eds), *Vir Vryheid en vir Reg*, pp63-64.

³⁵ Cape of Good Hope, *Statute Act No 21 of 1858*, June 5, 1858, pp387-88.

³⁶ Cape of Good Hope, *Government Gazette*, No 167, 6 March 1900, lists 121 gaols and 87 lock-ups.

³⁷ CAR, Note on the TOK Inventory re details of the Tokai Prison.

The first 36 convicted High Treason prisoners held at Tokai had been committed under a warrant of the Supreme Court. These men had been captured near Douglas in January 1900, were convicted of High Treason on 23 April 1900 and were admitted on 3 November 1900 to Tokai. Because Tokai was a Colonial Convict Station on the British model, the register gave a full description of the prisoners, noting height, colour of hair and eyes. There is also a detailed description of every mole, scar, wart, tattoo and vaccination mark, and its position on the body.³⁸ Most of the Douglas rebels captured at Sunnyside were short, scarred, and their warts were characteristic of people who ate very little fresh produce. The scars noted around the insides of the thighs indicated that most of them rode bareback, perhaps because they were too poor to own proper saddles. Merriman described these Griqualand West rebels in his diary on 23 April 1900 as, "miserable creatures, nearly all paupers who were tried and sentenced for high treason, poor wretches".³⁹

The richer rebels, who were later imprisoned and also fined, were invariably taller and carried fewer scars, warts and moles. None of those captured during the first invasion, unlike the later rebels, carried the scars of old bullet wounds except for Jan de Wet of Mosheshsford, Barkly East who was scarred up the right side of his body after being shelled at New Year 1900.⁴⁰

Political prisoners convicted of High Treason without hard labour could wear their own clothing, if it was fit to use. They were permitted to two full suits of strong clothing, two pairs of socks, three flannel shirts, two pairs of boots, one felt hat, three handkerchiefs, two pairs of under trousers and one pair of braces or a belt. Those whose private clothing was too worn were supplied with clothes, except that they were given only one pair of boots and did not receive waistcoats. The regulations stated that a visit of not more than three friends or relatives for fifteen minutes was permitted in a special room once a month. However visitors could stay longer, visit more frequently and the prisoner received additional post if he was prepared to work, and his conduct remained satisfactory.⁴¹ In January 1902 prisoners had offered up prayers for the success of the King's enemies had their visits suspended for a month, except for those from their wives.⁴² In July 1901 prisoners with funds were allowed to buy their own bed, table and chair, and also tobacco. The men were allowed to work outside the prison, grafting American vines at 6d per day. After July 1902 the prisoners were also permitted to buy whatever food they wanted.⁴³ The Warden, ME Orpen, who was later thanked for "his courteous and impartial treatment of the political prisoners", had tried to ease

³⁸ CAR, TOK 2/16, Register of High Treason Cases at Tokai Gaol.

³⁹ Lewsen (ed), *Selections from The Correspondence of John X Merriman, 1899-1905*, p188.

⁴⁰ CAR, TOK 2/6, Register of all persons received into custody, Johannes Francois de Wet, no 68

⁴¹ CAR, TOK 2/1, Prison Regulations.

⁴² CAR, TOK 2/1615, Instructions from the Under Colonial Secretary's Office, Cape Town, 3 January 1903.

⁴³ CAR, TOK 2/1 2711/1613, Letter signed HB Share, Under Colonial Secretary, re furniture; CAR, TOK B 605/1615, re tobacco and grafting vines.

their lot.⁴⁴ While he could not change their time of incarceration, Orpen acquired a good reputation for treating his charges humanely.

Serving time: doing hard labour

In November 1901 Governor Hely-Hutchinson commuted the death sentences of JT Burke, HJ Bruwer and DR van Rooyen to life imprisonment with hard labour at the Breakwater Convict Station in Cape Town. Also on the Breakwater was a Baralong, one Kalebe who had been sentenced to sixteen years for murder, High Treason and theft, and Barend C Lottering serving a three-year sentence with hard labour. Bruwer said they only got a meal at night, a thin soup with a few beans in it. They slept on a mat on planks two and a half by six feet. The blankets were so thin the sun, moon and stars shone through the holes, he complained. The convicts on the Breakwater station failed to receive amnesty in March 1903 despite the efforts of Advocate FS Malan.⁴⁵

When the Military took over the Martial Law Courts in April 1901 the whole system speeded up as the preliminary investigation by a Magistrate and the examination of the docket by the Attorney General was no longer required. Under the new system a sentence of death or penal servitude had to be confirmed by the General Commanding in Chief, and the proceedings of all Military Courts were forwarded to the Deputy-Judge Advocate-General after promulgation.⁴⁶

The return of rebels issued in 1903 stated that Military Courts tried 800 cases. Of the 435 rebels originally sentenced to death, 409 were commuted to a life sentence of penal servitude on Bermuda or St Helena.⁴⁷ The local gaols were not only filled with awaiting trial prisoners, but those awaiting sentence. In prison at the same time were Boer sympathizers charged with breaches of Martial Law regulations, such as 'harbouring rebels', 'failing to report the presence of rebels', 'failing to report that their sons had joined a commando' and 'supplying rebels with food'.⁴⁸ Graaff-Reinet was the most important prison as a standing military court was held there. Twelve Cape rebels were sentenced to death and executed there, and 215 death sentences were commuted to penal servitude for life.⁴⁹

Gert Malan, who was captured with Lötter's Commando on 5 September 1901, said the Graaff-Reinet Gaol was completely overcrowded, and they slept on the stones under two blankets.

⁴⁴ CAR, TOK 2/1, Letter of thanks on behalf of prisoners by PC Massyn of Barkly West sent 12 March 1903 to the Attorney General's Office. It was forwarded to the Tokai Gaol.

⁴⁵ CAR, AG 2117, List of persons convicted of High Treason under Act 6 of 1900; CAR, AG 2080, Special Treason court 1900-1903, Folio 24, Lists of convicts on Breakwater Convict Station, 19 May 1903; Cape of Good Hope, *Official Publications*, C 20-1904.

⁴⁶ CAR, Cd, 981, Papers relating to the Administration of Martial Law in South Africa, p84.

⁴⁷ CAR, AG 2106, Return of Rebels 1903; Cape of Good Hope, *Debates of the House of Assembly 1902*, p24.

⁴⁸ CAR, Cd 981, Papers relating to Martial Law in South Africa, pp81, 221-22.

⁴⁹ CAR, Cd 981, Papers relating to Martial Law in South Africa, pp121-155; CAR, Cd 1364, The Royal Commission for the revision of Martial Law sentences, pp1-55.

The place swarmed with lice and the food was appalling. By 26 September the trials of most of the members of the commando were completed. The verdict was guilty of High Treason and murder in all cases. Parties of rebels were sent to their hometowns where their sentences would be promulgated. Malan said that they saw something of the countryside on the train journey to Middelburg; and it took their minds off the terrible thought that they would all receive the death sentence for a little while. They were all terribly tense; what was going to happen?

On 11 October 1901 the sixteen Middelburg convicted rebels were escorted to the market square in Middelburg and "stood like a pen of sheep for sale;" soldiers surrounding them. There was dead silence as a senior officer stepped forward and announced in a haughty manner that they had been sentenced to death, but Lord Kitchener in his mercy had commuted their sentences to penal servitude for life on Bermuda. Malan gave a sigh of relief; thank God he wasn't getting a bullet. That same day they left by train for Durban, from where they were sent to Bermuda, and wept that Cmdt Lötter and four of their officers, Pieter Wolfaardt, Willem Kruger, Johannes Schoeman and Willem Kruger were to be executed.⁵⁰

Nobody knew where they were going. Willem Steyn said at Dordrecht that they had never even heard of Bermuda when their sentences were promulgated on 22 July 1901. Reluctantly they asked the Dordrecht Town Guard, if any of them had heard of such a place. The sergeant must have been sorry for them, said Steyn, because he said reassuringly, "Don't worry. It's a place overflowing with milk and honey".⁵¹ Barend Johannes van der Berg of Rietvlei Middelburg who had been shot in the shoulder at Wildefontein, described in detail the long wearisome journey from Dordrecht that took 19 days through the Free State to Durban travelling during daylight, no doubt to guard against the prisoners escaping. Van der Berg, who had ridden shoot and scoot with the commando and slept in the open with his saddle for pillow in the exciting days of freedom, now complained bitterly about his care, the cold and the food; as most prisoners do who have nothing to look forward too except more dull days.⁵²

Overcrowding remained a problem in most country gaols. The Inspector of Prisons visited the Cradock Prison in October 1901 and reported that although the yards and cells were scrupulously neat and clean, the rooms would be inadequate if the present gaoler had a family. Among the 54 prisoners were six prisoners-of-war (European), seventeen High Treason Prisoners (European), one High Treason Prisoner (black), and three Military Prisoners (black). A female High Treason prisoner occupied the female yard.⁵³ She was probably Mrs Martha Brooks of Maraisburg who had been

⁵⁰ Herman Scholtemeijer, 'Ek was te dood veroordeel. Oorlogswedervaringe van Gert J Malan', *Die Huisgenoot*, 6 May 1949, pp19-20,62.

⁵¹ Shearing, *The Brave Boer Boy and Other Stories*, p61.

⁵² NAR, A 1554, unpublished report of BJ van der Berg, Tokai prison, 1903

⁵³ Fish River Museum, Cradock, report of the office of Inspector of Prisoners, 19 December 1901.

sentenced to 30 days imprisonment during September for baking bread for Van Reenen's Commando, when they raided the village in March 1901.⁵⁴

The reality of penal servitude

The Cape rebels sentenced to penal servitude were not welcome on Bermuda. From June 1901 963 burghers and a few rebels were living in prisoner-of-war camps on Darrell and Burts Islands. When the Governor, Sir George Barker, received a report that an additional 36 Cape rebels, sentenced to penal servitude, were arriving on the SS *Montrose*, he complained to the Secretary of State for War and said that he thought he was meant to be running a POW camp in accordance with The Hague Convention, and not a penal colony. There were no facilities for handling convicts or the willingness to receive them, he stressed. As a result of his protests the Cape rebels that arrived on 13 September 1901 were incarcerated in the military prison at St George's.⁵⁵

The legal crux of the matter was that the first Hague War Convention of 1899, had made a crucial distinction between war and rebellion, which was deleted at the Hague Convention of 1907. "The law of war does not apply to all armed conflicts, but only to such conflicts as, by the usage of states, constitutes war. War exists when the organised armed forces of one state are opposed to the organised armed forces of another state. Wars also exist within the bounds of a single state when organized armed forces of sufficient power make the issue doubtful, placing themselves in opposition to the armed forces of the existing government. If disaffected forces are in a state of flagrant inferiority to those of the existing government, they are in a state of rebellion." Rebels as outlaws had no rights.⁵⁶

As a result of being sentenced to penal servitude because of rebellion, these young colonists did not even have recourse to the courtesy of being treated under the Hague Rules. Penal servitude had been introduced into British criminal law after transportation to Australia had been abolished in 1853, and was a form of imprisonment with hard labour.⁵⁷ Once inside the prison the 36 rebels, mostly inexperienced youngsters from the rural areas, were forced into a system designed to break old lags and suffered brutal ill treatment for three months. The young rebels from the Midlands had originally been sentenced to death, and this was then commuted to penal servitude for life on Bermuda. They had arrived in Durban by train, were swung in baskets on board SS *Montrose*, handcuffed in pairs, and sailed for Bermuda. Their existence was spartan in contrast to the excellent treatment given to the burghers. Another prisoner, TP Brain, a member of the Free State Government,

⁵⁴ *Midland News*, 12 September 1901.

⁵⁵ Benbow, *Boer Prisoners of War in Bermuda*, pp6-7.

⁵⁶ Barclay, Laws of War, *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, XXXIII, pp750, 751; War Office, *Manual of Military Law*, Chapter XIV, pp302 & 444, Hostilities in arms by individuals not belonging to the armed forces.

⁵⁷ *Oxford English Dictionary*, CD-ROM.

thanked the Purser, for his 'excellent catering' at the end of the voyage.⁵⁸ Willem Steyn said they wore convict uniform and when the ship docked they were handcuffed in pairs again as they scrubbed and cleaned the prisoner's quarters. A large crowd of local people watched them disembark, and Steyn overheard a shocked voice commenting that they were white people like themselves. The broad arrows on the back of their tunics showed up in photographs taken of the disembarking rebels.⁵⁹

In the military prisons they were confined three to a cell, eleven feet by twelve feet with a tiny window, high up. Each cell contained three stools, pallets to sleep on and a piece of wood set into the corner for a table. They were ordered to shave and bath and were given clean uniforms to wear, after which the regimen of penal servitude began. They were kept confined in their cells and were not allowed to speak. The general order was "No talking! No looking!" When the guard ordered a prisoner out of the cell, he had to stand facing the wall in the corridor, and was then ordered to turn left or right to the washing areas on instruction.

Each day a section of coconut fibre rope was weighed and then handed to each prisoner with orders to unravel it. At the end of ten hours the threads were weighed. If the amount was less than when the rope was handed out, the prisoners were punished with 'Shot drill', which meant lifting, carrying and putting down heavy balls of shot repetitively or their food was reduced to bread and water.

The only person with an inkling of what was going on inside the prison was the Rev JR Albertyn. He had worked in the St Helena POW camp, and was permitted to transfer to Bermuda. He and his wife arrived on the SS *Manilla Castle* at the beginning of August 1901, and it was his duty to hold services in the military prison. Notes in his photograph album (now in the Caledon Museum) as well as a paper in the War Museum, Bloemfontein, describe the brutal regime the first group of rebels underwent, and support Steyn's statements in full. Albertyn had to hold his service on a stand in the inner courtyard on a Tuesday, where he was separated from his congregation by a barbed wire fence. The Clergyman movingly called these services 'a water fountain in the wilderness', and said he cried as he preached to the suffering 36, while they listened to the one life-line thrown to them each week, with tears streaming down their faces.⁶⁰

Although the regime sounds appalling in 2004, an article consulted on prison discipline of 1902 claimed that steady progress had been made to more enlightened methods, and that confined cellular treatment was only retained in cases of penal servitude for the first six months, and that the rule of silence had generally been relaxed except for certain classes of prisoners. Attention was now concentrated on the manufacture of handcrafts. The teasing of the fibres was a means of keeping the

⁵⁸ Van Schoor, MCE, (ed), "*Dagboek*" van Rocco de Villiers, Christiaan de Wet-Annale, III, p59.

⁵⁹ Steyn, 'Kaapse Rebel te Bermuda', Private Archives of C Steyn, Glentana, pp45-46; Benbow, *Boer Prisoners of War on Bermuda*, photograph p7.

⁶⁰ War Museum of the Boer Republics, Bloemfontein, Albertyn, Unpublished Account, MS 1723/13, Kimberley.

men busy, and was then in use as a filling for mattresses.⁶¹ The discipline though was excessive and Willem Steyn claimed that William Evans Johnston of Tweefontein, Colesberg died as a result of excessive exertion in the prison and that after that a doctor had to examine a prisoner before he underwent 'shot drill' to ensure that he was strong enough for that punishment.⁶² According to the inscription on the Boer Prisoner of War Memorial on Long Island Johnston died of enteric on 15 January 1903. However Dr CAR Schulenberg of Pretoria established that Johnston died in the prison at St Georges and his remains were re-interred on Long Island in 1903.⁶³ While the full story is still only conjecture, Steyn's insistence that Johnston indeed died in St George's Military prison in 1901 and not in 1903, has proved to be correct.

Remarkably many young rebels were not cowed by their brutal treatment. Christian Fick Goedhals of Pearston was punished a dozen times, much of it 'shot drill'. Gert Coetzee of Jordaanskraal Cradock and Christian Francois (Roelf) Marais of Rietvlei Middelburg, got 'shot drill' when they climbed up the cell walls and called to each other through a window and alerted the guard. Another punishment was being kept in solitary confinement in a dark cell for days on end. Steyn developed chronic bleeding from an infected tooth that had been crudely extracted. He collapsed in the middle of November 1901 from loss of blood, and a civilian doctor was called to see him. Steyn heard him angrily threaten to report the Chief Warder if the prisoner's treatment did not improve, and he demanded that the men get fresh air and exercise daily.⁶⁴ When Governor Barker received news that another group of penal servitude prisoners were due to arrive, he informed Chamberlain that he would only treat them as prisoners-of-war.⁶⁵ It is probable that when Johnston died the doctor reported the circumstances of his death to the Governor, who decided to remove control of the penal servitude prisoners from the Chief Warder. It is certain that military type punishments were inflicted on the rebels as this would have explained the use of 'shot drill'. Meanwhile Johannes van der Walt of Middelburg, who used the alias of Strydsman of Rouxville, was having a fairly easy time of it in the Free State camp and probably never even caught sight of his colonial brothers. That the rebels in St Georges did not betrayed him is remarkable and quite noteworthy. What they thought of him remains conjecture.⁶⁶

On 20 December 1901 when 250 more rebels convicted under Martial Law arrived on the *Harlech Castle*, they were housed in a separate enclosure on Hawkins Island, fenced with two cordons

⁶¹ Major Arthur Griffiths, formerly HM Inspector of Prisons, 'Prison Discipline', *The Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Vol XXXII, p7.

⁶² Steyn, 'Kaapse Rebel te Bermuda', Private Archives of C Steyn, Glentana, p48.

⁶³ Benbow, *Boer Prisoners of War in Bermuda*, p48.

⁶⁴ Steyn, 'Kaapse Rebel te Bermuda', Private Archives of C Steyn, Glentana, pp35-36.

⁶⁵ Benbow, *Boer Prisoners of War in Bermuda*, p7.

⁶⁶ FAR Staff Officer: Alias of Hendrik Stephanus Johannes van der Walt of Wolwefontein, Middelburg: Johannes Strydsman, POW 20449 26, Grootdam Rouxville Vechtkop veld cornetcy, captured near Barkly West, sic Barkly East 6 June 1901, to Bermuda. Pers Com JW van der Walt, Kwambonambi, 2004

of barbed wire, and over-looked by a guard tower. As a result of an outbreak of measles on board they were quarantined and it was January 1902 before the rebels in the Military prison joined their fellows in the stockade.⁶⁷ The newly arrived rebels were to have started hard labour on 2 January 1902, but the governor treated them well and nothing much came of his hard labour, said Malan. When he was transferred in March 1902, and a much harder man took his place they had to work in gangs in the quarries.⁶⁸ Jacobus Lodewicus Coetzee, also of Lötter's Commando, said they worked in gangs for nine hours per day from March, supposedly in silence. Tobacco was forbidden, although the burgher prisoners threw tobacco over the fences when the guards were not looking.⁶⁹

Albertyn knew too much about the conditions at St Georges, and it is not surprising that the British looked for a pretext to order the couple back to South Africa.⁷⁰ They first spent some time in New York and Boston, reporting to relief organizations about conditions in the camps. Albertyn was later branded "a dangerous man and a nuisance" by Governor Geary. Rumours however kept circulating that some prisoners had been ill-treated. As there were eventually over 4,500 prisoners-of-war scattered over six islands in the Great Sound by the end of the war and no visitors were allowed in the Cape rebels camp, it is hardly surprising that investigators eventually decided that the lives of the prisoners-of-war on Bermuda were dull and monotonous and nothing more.⁷¹

Steyn said when he and his brother Hendrik arrived on Hawkins Island they found their father, Charl Jacobus Steyn, among the prisoners from Lötter's Commando. They were both distressed to see how frail Charl was; he had lost an eye, and the socket festered constantly. The convicts, away from the hated prison at last, were thankful to work out of doors in the quarries of Long Island, connected to Hawkins Island by a footbridge. They were divided into gangs under the supervision of two guards, and the youngsters were soon on the lookout for ways to wreck the hammers and picks behind the guards' backs.⁷² Steyn said that he and Barend Pretorius of Langkloof, Cradock, Andries Kruger of Klipfontein, Steynsburg and Isaac Myburgh of Blaaskraal, Tarkastad managed to tip a cask of cement into the sea, and later decided that the punishment of being confined to a dark cell was worthwhile.

For those undergoing penal servitude the end of the war did not mean that they would automatically be repatriated. Steyn senior was hospitalised in September 1902 with a recurring kidney infection; he sent for his two sons and broke the news that he was dying, and as head of the family instructed them on how they were to sort out his affairs when they returned home. He died on 12

⁶⁷ Benbow, *Boer Prisoners of War in Bermuda*, pp7, 13.

⁶⁸ Scholtemeijer, 'Ek was te dood veroordeel', *Die Huisgenoot*, 6 May 1949, p63.

⁶⁹ Jacobus Lodewikus Coetzee, information brochure, "n Vertelling van Jacobus Lodewikus Coetzee wat op 5 September 1901 deur die Engelse Gevangene Geneem is op die Plaas Perdefontein in die distrik Graaff-Reinet (Pearston) saam met Kommandant Lotter", PW Vorster Museum, Middelburg, p4.

⁷⁰ Van Schoor (ed), *Dagboek van 'Rocco de Villiers*, p78. Joubert Reitz, also on Bermuda, had a letter smuggled out that appeared in the *Boston Globe*, appealing for food and clothing. Reitz denied that Albertyn was involved.

⁷¹ Benbow, *Boer Prisoners of War in Bermuda*, pp18-24, 33.

September 1902 and was buried on Long Island. While his death was a blow, it was not entirely unexpected because he had been chronically ill for nine months.

For Willem it was the death of his brother Hendrik that shattered him; he died unexpectedly of pneumonia on 6 November less than two months later. He had accidentally fallen overboard, but was not allowed to change into dry clothes according to Steyn. The official cause of death was enteric; Steyn blamed one of the doctors for calling Hendrik a malingerer and refusing to treat him. Only when Willem Steyn collapsed and a different doctor examined him, was he able to complain about his brother's lack of treatment. The Major was rightly alarmed, and as two members of the same family had already died in captivity, Steyn was hospitalised for nearly six weeks. Whether he had contracted enteric or was suffering from depression or both is not clear, but he was well treated and eventually recovered. He received a visit from the Governor who was kind and encouraged him to get better, saying that his family at home would need him when he got back. Rebels were only allowed a single letter per month, and the deaths of his father and perhaps guilt feelings about his brother who did not really want to rebel, as well as lack of contact with his family, had driven Steyn almost mad.⁷³

Rev Albertyn, according to his granddaughter, received permission to read letters to special prisoners. The rebels in the stockade were not allowed to hear news about the progress of the war, so Albertyn would memorize the letters and, standing outside the fence, between his readings of the psalms would intersperse them with news from home. The two guards beside him did not understand Dutch and no one was the wiser.⁷⁴

After he left there was little contact between the burghers on Hawkins Island and the rebels behind their barbed wire fence. Rev JA van Blerk, who arrived in October 1901, was restricted to Morgans Island, and his only contact with the rebels was at church services and funerals, and when he supervised them building a wall around the Boer Prisoner-of-War graveyard.⁷⁵ Apart from William Johnston and Charl and Hendrik Steyn, Diederick Jacobus de Bruyn of Upsal, Somerset East died of enteric on 8 April 1902. Their names all appear on the Long Island Memorial.⁷⁶

⁷² Middelburg, PW Vorster Museum, 'Vertelling van Coetzee', p4.

⁷³ Steyn, 'Kaapse Rebel te Bermuda', Private Archives of C Steyn, Glentana, pp48-51; Middelburg, PW Vorster Museum, 'Vertelling van Coetzee', p5. Steyn said they were not allowed letters, but Coetzee said he was on Bermuda for six months when he received a letter and a photograph from his mother.

⁷⁴ Benbow, *Boer Prisoners of War in Bermuda*, p32.

⁷⁵ Van Schoor (ed), *Dagboek van Rocco de Villiers*. See photograph facing p60; Steyn, 'Kaapse Rebel te Bermuda', Private Archives of C Steyn, Glentana, p55.

⁷⁶ Benbow, *Boer Prisoners of War in Bermuda*, p48.

The Royal Commission

When they heard that the war was over, Malan said their food improved in amount and quality, they were allowed more freedom and their warders treated them leniently.⁷⁷ The results of a Royal Commission, led by the Chief Justice of England, Baron Alverstone, commissioned to review Martial Law sentences, were announced in November 1902. The commission had examined 794 cases of penal servitude, imprisonment and cases of unpaid fines, and 721 related to Cape Colonists. A parade was held on Bermuda on 18 January 1903 and prisoners 21 years of age and less had their sentences reduced to two years and the adults to three years. For every twelve months served, there was a further reduction of three months.⁷⁸ However some, like William Stadler Blignaut of Molteno who had escaped and was recaptured, found his original sentence of five years was unaltered and would still expire on 26 June 1906. Cornelius Johannes Muller of Barkly West had four years commuted from an original 12-year sentence, and this was set to expire in April 1906.⁷⁹ The war was over and Great Britain was trying to close the camps and hand the care and the cost of the rebels back to the Colonial Government. Why they inflicted such harsh sentences, such as penal servitude for life when they knew the war was coming to an end, is a mystery.

On St Helena Cape rebels sentenced to penal servitude arrived on the *Orient* on 27 January 1902, and were among the over 1,000 other Boer prisoners sent down from Ladysmith. These 23 rebels were housed in a small but secure camp surrounded by barbed wire fences, especially erected for them in the vicinity of Deadwood Camp. They worked in the stone quarries for eight hours a day. No report of harsh treatment or the wearing of convict uniform has been traced. A further 58 rebels arrived on 31 March 1902, but were treated routinely as prisoners-of-war. New orders must have arrived, and on 14 April 1902 both groups were combined, and hard labour for rebels was dropped.⁸⁰

Among the late arrivals on St Helena was the intrepid Hendrik Stephanus (Henna) Erasmus of Spitzkop, Cradock. He was congenitally disabled, having very short arms and rudimentary fingers replacing his elbows. Despite this disability he was in Std 4 at Cradock Boys School when he slipped away and joined an older brother in Cmdt Kritzinger's Commando during March 1901. He proved to be an asset on commando as he was an excellent horseman and, surprisingly, an outstanding shot. He was captured at Wepener on 13 October 1901, and a death sentence for High Treason promulgated at Cradock was commuted to life imprisonment on St Helena. A glimpse of Erasmus' undaunted attitude towards the military appears in the *Midland News*. "Erasmus seemed to take his sentence - penal servitude for life - very coolly, and marched off the square with a light swinging step."⁸¹

⁷⁷ Scholtemeijer, 'Ek was te dood veroordeel', *Die Huisgenoot*, 6 May 1949, p63.

⁷⁸ Middelburg, PW Vorster Museum, 'Vertelling van Coetzee', p5.

⁷⁹ CAR, Cd 1364, The Royal Commission for the Revision of Martial Law Sentences, pp2-55.

⁸⁰ PJ Nienaber (ed), *Boere op St Helena*, pp131-34.

⁸¹ FAR, SO/POW; Pets Marais, *Penkoppe van die Tweede Vryheidsoorlog 1899-1902*, p184.

After a century it's difficult to have insight into the rebels on St Helena and Bermuda; it's all so long ago. Then a hard covered notebook arrived which once belonged to Hans Jurgens Erasmus of Spitzkop, Cradock who was in Deadwood Camp on St Helena with his brother Henna. It contains the usual report of a Bible Study group, lists of names of prisoners and songs. The song *Die Rebel*, sung to the tune of *Oh, Willie Dear*, carries something of the homesickness, alienation and despair they felt.

A loose translation of the Rebel Song is:

"The Rebel Song

"Here am I on St Helena with a broken heart. I am banned from my fatherland and I cry to God in my bitter grief. My spirit flies over the ocean, and my breaking heart is full of pain as I see from afar the misery of my beloved and my dear ones. The little ones ask in sorrow, when is father coming home? It's a question that pierces their mother's heart, already confused and perplexed in her time of sad trial."⁸²

The rebels return to the Cape Colony

Finally the first batch of Boer prisoners left St Helena and Bermuda, once the burghers had signed the oath of allegiance to King Edward the VII from 26 June 1902 onwards, and by 21 October 1902 the majority had gone.⁸³ Johannes Strydsman had signed the oath of allegiance as he had claimed he was a Free Stater and returned to the Cape Colony earlier on the SS *Auronia* in October 1902. Eventually his colonial identity was discovered, in AG 3558 there is a brief note about HSJ Van der Walt of Middelburg stating that he 'returned 31 October 1902'.⁸⁴

⁸² HJ Erasmus, 'Gedachtes', compiled on St Helena, private archives of HA Shearing, Sedgefield, April 28 1902. *Die Rebel Lied* has thirteen verses; the first three read:

"Hier zet ik in St Helena Strand
Met een verbreijzend hart
Verbannen uit ons vadersland
O God hoe bitter is die smart.

"Mijn geest zweeft over de ocean
Mijn hart bezwyk van bitter pyn,
Want daar ziet ik de ellende aan
Van die mij liefde en diebaar zyn.

"Uw kleinen vragen uw met smart
Wanneer kom vader weer te huis?
Die vraag doorboord uw moeders hart
Verwaard die bitter smart en kruis."

⁸³ C Benbow, *Boer Prisoners of War in Bermuda*, p46 Former prisoners-of-war left Bermuda from 9 July 1902 until 20 August 1904. The following ships sailed for Cape Town with former burghers on board: SS *Roslin Castle* (386 men), 12 August 1902, SS *City of Vienna*, (1088 men) 25 August, SS *Staffordshire*, (1012 men), 8 August, SS *Auronia* (1025 men), 8 October, SS *Sunda* (291 men) 23 October 1902.

⁸⁴ CAR, AG 3558, Hendrik Stephanus Johannes van der Walt of Wolwefontein Middelburg.

About 90 rebels remained on St Helena as a working party to clear the grounds, and only five remained by January 1903.⁸⁵ A copy of a thoroughly alarmed letter by 'A Commission of Prisoners in Deadwood Camp No 3' to the Governor of the Cape Colony said that early in September the Camp Commandant informed the rebels that the Colonial Government had ordered them to recommence hard labour. These orders were then changed, and they were told to pack up and leave with the remaining POWs on 21 October 1902. The morning the ship sailed they were ordered back to work, and the ship left without them. The letter is in private hands, so it is not clear if the Governor received it and at what stage the prisoners discovered they had not been abandoned, but would leave when the camp was cleared. The letter was signed by Nicholas Stephanus du Plessis of Philipstown; Willem du Preez of Klipfontein, Burghersdorp; Hans Jurgen Erasmus, Klipfontein, Cradock; Pieter Greef of Pampoenkraal, Malmesbury; Jasper Cloete of Bruinput, Carnarvon; and Pierre Daniel Rousseau of Molteno.⁸⁶

Eighty Cape rebels arrived at the Alfred Docks on HMS *Plessey* on 6 January 1903 from St Helena, and were transferred to the Tokai Gaol. One of the prisoners, Adrian Johannes du Toit of Kleinfontein, Calvinia, had died on 30 May 1902 and was buried at Knollcomb cemetery.⁸⁷ When these prisoners arrived in Cape Town there was an urgent search for three men who should have been released in November 1902, but who could not be traced due to a clerical error. They were Louis Jacobus Kotze of Calvinia, sentenced at Calvinia to penal servitude for life, Johannes Petrus Louw, sentenced at Kenhardt to penal servitude for five years and Willem du Preez, sentenced at Graaff-Reinet to penal servitude for life. They were found, identified and released.⁸⁸

Finally the SS *Sunda* arrived back at Bermuda and on 21 January 1903 sailed with 291 Cape rebels on board for Cape Town. Although they were thankful to be going home, Steyn said they were bitter because they were left until last. There were difficulties on the voyage with Michael Vosloo of Willowmore who was totally traumatized and had to be tied down below decks to keep him from jumping overboard. Clearly also traumatized was Willem Steyn, who returned home alone from Bermuda.⁸⁹ The rebels arrived in Cape Town on 15 February 1903, and were very well treated by the Tokai staff. Rudolph Marais' condition was so poor that his parents were sent for from Somerset East by the alarmed staff. Best of all, they could wear civilian clothes again, and write as many letters as they liked.⁹⁰

⁸⁵ *The Anglo-Boer War Philatelic Society, Publication No 2, Part B, p60.*

⁸⁶ Dr JJ du Toit, George, correspondence in his private archives, 21 October 1902.

⁸⁷ Van Schoor, *Die Bannelinge*, p13; CAR, TOK 2/17, A Register of Prisoners received into custody at Tokai Gaol.

⁸⁸ CAR, TOK 2/1 B 1/1615, Letter to ARM Tokai Prison from Colonial Secretary's Office, 3 January 1903.

⁸⁹ Steyn, 'Kaapse Rebel te Bermuda', Private Archives of C Steyn, Glentana, pp63-64.

⁹⁰ Middelburg, PW Vorster Museum, 'Vertelling van Coetzee', p5.

Going home

Johannes Bosman, who was left behind at Cradock suffering from an attack of malaria while fighting under Smuts, described the tense expectant atmosphere in the Tokai Gaol when the Attorney General, TL Graham, addressed the rebels and announced a partial amnesty from 21 March 1903. He said that His Majesty's Government understood that as a result of circumstances and family sympathies they had allowed their feelings to get out of hand, and had transgressed the law. They would be freed, but would still be permanently disqualified from voting.⁹¹

The men were given an outfit of clothing, a blanket and rations, as well as a 2nd class railway ticket and were released in groups to prevent congestion on the trains. The indigent were also given 10/- each. When the first groups reached Matjesfontein they sent a telegram to Tokai saying that they had no food; the staff discovered they had been so excited that they had forgotten to take their rations. From then on they were not allowed to leave without food for the journey.⁹²

Frans Joubert of Colesberg left the Kimberley Gaol on 23 March 1903. He wrote to his wife, but did not mention that he had been sentenced on 16 March to two year's imprisonment as a Class 1 rebel. Instead he described his sweet remembrance of their quiet Sundays on the old farm, and praised her for her patience, giving her the happy news that all 47 of them would be home, hopefully within the week.⁹³

Johannes Coetzee remembered the long train journey home, Rosemead Station crowded with family and friends and the eighteen horse carts that carried them home in triumph. He reached his home, Rietvlei, Middelburg at the end of March 1903 to a loving welcome from his parents and his sisters. They sat around the table and just talked and talked and it was well after midnight before they went to bed. For over a week friends and neighbours rode from farm to farm shaking hands with the Lötter men who had at last come home from Bermuda.⁹⁴

⁹¹ Bosman, *Slaan en Vlug*, Pretoria, p69.

⁹² CAR, TOK 2/1, Correspondence to and from ARM Office, Tokai re release of amnestied prisoners.

⁹³ War Museum of the Boer Republics, Bloemfontein, 4305/62, FN Joubert's letters to his wife, 16 January 1903; CAR, AG 2117, List of persons convicted of High Treason under Act 6 of 1900.

⁹⁴ Shearing, *Commandant Johannes Lötter and his Rebels*, p66.

CHAPTER 7

ADVERSARIAL ATTITUDES AND THE AFRIKANER BOND

Students and rebellion

As the South African War continued, public opinion in the Cape Colony became more polarised. The colonial loyalists, separated emotionally from those they called the disloyalists, expressed feelings against them that ranged from bitter enmity down to a mild irritation. The hardliners sympathetic to the Boer forces also naturally saw no other view but their own, and there was little room between the two for moderate opinion.

Venter's thought-provoking document, *Die Invloed van die Anglo-Boereoorlog (1899-1902) op die Stellenbosse Gemeenskap* discusses the racial tension that developed in the Stellenbosch community in 1900. This was put down by the Vigilance Committee to the fact that education was in the hands of the 'Dutch'. In this light Stellenbosch was seen as a 'rebel factory' that might pose a threat to British supremacy after the war. But just how rebel was Stellenbosch? Of the 47 men and youths listed as having joined the enemy from the District of Stellenbosch by Magistrate Herold, only five were actually Cape colonists. By far the majority had come from the Boer Republics to study at the Theology College, the Gymnasium and the Victoria College. Due to a state of war between the Boer Republics and the Cape Colony, republican students would obviously have been listed and kept under surveillance; they mostly appeared to have returned home when hostilities commenced in any case. Of the remaining five colonial rebels, who are listed as having joined the Boer forces from Stellenbosch, John Martin Beyers, was captured in Pretoria in February 1901; his case was withdrawn for lack of evidence in July 1902. Jacobus Bosman had joined the Boers when he was in Steynsburg; Carel Wilhelm Knop was disfranchised for five years in January 1903 at Upington; Pierre D Rossouw had joined the Boer forces at Molteno, and P de Vos in Johannesburg. Rebellion in Stellenbosch certainly appears to have remained only talk.¹

¹ CAR, AG 2097, lists of Persons who have joined the enemy from the district of Stellenbosch; Bosman, *Slaan en Vluc*, p1; CAR, AG 3558, Register of rebels who are prisoners of war, for Rossouw, Beyers and P de Vos; CAR, AG 2117, Indemnity and Specials Tribunals Act of 1900, sitting held in Upington where Knop was disfranchised until 1908; Chris Venter, 'Die Invloed van die Anglo-Boereoorlog (1899-1902) op die Stellenbosse Gemeenskap', in *Annale 2001/1*, Department of History, University of Stellenbosch, Summary, pvii. Rossouw also appears as Rosseau previously.

Two students at the Tertia theological seminary, Christian Hendrik Stulting of Philipolis, OFS and Christian Andries van Niekerk of Kroonstad, became naturalized as British citizens in order to vote for the Afrikaner Bond.² However to qualify as a householder you had to prove you had the key to the front door, which a student did not have and consequently they could not be placed on the voters roll. War broke out, and they received the unwelcome news that if they fought for their country and were captured they could face charges of High Treason.³ Both their names do appear on a list of alleged rebels; Stulting is recorded as having returned to Stellenbosch and took no further part in the war, whereas Cmdt Van Niekerk stayed in the field and eventually voted against the peace proposals at Vereeniging - he must have applied for Free State nationality once again because as a Cape Rebel he would not have been allowed to attend the proceedings.⁴

The loyalists came to the fore. Because the Stellenbosch Mounted Infantry Volunteers were not called up at the outbreak of war, unknown numbers of these Volunteers joined the South African Light Horse in November 1899, who then raised 500 men in early 1900 and a further 500 in June 1901. Kitchener's Horse raised 600 men, including recruits from Stellenbosch, in January 1900; in the March intake 37 out of 428 raised came from Stellenbosch. When the Colonial Defence Force was raised in December 1900 the district raised both District Mounted Troops and Town Guards.⁵ Stellenbosch, continued Venter, was uniquely affected by the war, and its name came to be feared by British officers that had been unsuccessful on the battlefield. To be 'Stellenbosched' and transferred to the local remount camp was a deeply degrading experience for any British officer.⁶

After Cmdt Maritz reached as far south as the nearby village of Darling in November 1901, all the boys from the Transvaal and OFS at the Gymnasium, who were sixteen years old or more, were summoned to appear before the Magistrate. He had orders that they were to be watched as it was suspected that they would run away and join the Boer forces. Freddie Kies said that the Magistrate was decent enough to send for them after the holidays and not before. The scholars all had to sign a parole form and take an oath saying they would be neutral for the remainder of the war, and were restricted to the town. Kies said that their fathers in the Boer Republics (his was at Harrismith) had also to sign the oath or risk being sent to Ceylon.⁷

² CAR, AG 2097; CAR, GG 857 1899; CAR, AG 2051.

³ HC Hopkins, *Maar een soos hy. Die Lewe van Kommandant CA Van Niekerk*, pp45-46.

⁴ CAR, AG 2051, Folio 390, Miscellaneous Documents 1899-1904; Malan, *Die Boere Offisiere*, p140.

⁵ Chris Venter, *Stellenbosch during the Anglo-Boer War, 1899-1902*, pp1-2; Amery (ed), *The Times History*, V, South African Corps, p613.

⁶ Venter, 'Die Invloed van die Anglo-Boereoorlog (1899-1902) op die Stellenbosse Gemeenskap', pvii.

⁷ F Kies, Unpublished diary, private archives of Mrs B van Rensburg, Beaufort West, 1982.

Administration of Martial Law

Much of the bitter feeling in the Cape Colony was blamed on abuse of the administration of Martial Law according to the Cape Attorney General James Rose Innes, who had returned from long leave in August 1901 to find the Colony in the "most frightful condition". He drafted a memorandum listing specific abuses of Martial Law and urged greater fairness in its application. Complaints were mainly over the arrest of people without justification; men between sixteen and 60 being forced to join the Colonial Defence Force and the absurd and senseless manner in which Martial Law was being administered.⁸

The cancellation of the travel permit of John X Merriman by Maj Potts of Stellenbosch on 25 August 1901 and his summary confinement to his home at Schoongezicht evoked a storm of protest. Sprigg sprang to Merriman's defence, demanding that the military retire from their position, saying that was not the way to treat a member of the Executive Council.⁹ Merriman had his travel permit restored, but was the first to say "that the case against hundreds of my fellow citizens is far worse".¹⁰

As for the unnecessary arrests of colonists that so concerned Rose Innes, even the data in a prison record book is not much help in trying to discover whether arrests were justified or not. When the original Uniondale Prison register, which was recently found forgotten in the gaol when it was put up for sale, was consulted, 194 names were extracted of those who were arrested and charged with breaking Martial Law regulations, infringing army regulations or charged with High Treason during the war. Of the Town Guard 19 were charged with being drunk and/or sleeping on duty. A further 89 local men appeared before the courts for infringing Martial Law regulations only. Of the 86 men who were charged with High Treason only nine were eventually convicted, plus two others who were sentenced by the courts, but whose names do not appear in the prisoner register. When the official final rebel tally for Uniondale was announced in 1903, the convictions under Martial Law were given as a low 10, but the gaol register indicates that 86 men were held in the cells who were later released and not charged.¹¹ Was what happened in Uniondale par for the course?

There is a Boshoff family story about Tienie Boshoff's aunt, a girl of 16, who lived at Leeuwkliprivier, Uniondale and said something 'bad' about Queen Victoria. She was forced to walk 22 miles into the village in front of a mounted British troop. Her father and a few other family members insisted on accompanying her. When they reached the courthouse they found a Capt Wright in charge. He

⁸ Wright (ed), *Sir James Rose Innes selected correspondence*, pp282-85.

⁹ CAR, PMO 80, unnumbered minute, Sprigg to Hely-Hutchinson, 30 August 1901.

¹⁰ Lewsen (ed) *Selections from the Correspondence of J X Merriman 1899-1905*, p302.

¹¹ CAR, AG 2106, Final rebel tally for June 1903; Cape of Good Hope, Uniondale Prison Register, Martial Law and High Treason cases from no 62 of 1900 to 60 of 1902, Uniondale.

was furious when he heard the girl had walked so far and was short off with the soldiers, "I don't want to hear anything. You hire the best horse cart and take her home", he ordered.¹²

Gen EY Brabant also had much to say about the administration of Martial Law, and he praised officers who administered it 'along commonsense lines', distinguishing between the loyal and disloyal sections of the population. He said that unfortunately there were men in authority who did not make this distinction with the result that people who were loyal found themselves treated as if they were rebels and were very discontented. The commandeering of both horses and mules throughout the Western Province had caused great losses to the farmers. At Malmesbury Martin Melk of Hopefield told Brabant that the feeling between the loyal and the disloyal was very bitter and because of it the loyals no longer took their place on the school board or in the church council of the Dutch Reformed Church.¹³

Afrikaner Bond blamed

When there is war in a society and opinions are divided on its cause, both sides soon have competing versions of history, competing versions of what was happening and why it was happening in the here and now. One of the many arguments between the so-called loyalists and disloyalists was whether the Afrikaner Bond was responsible for the rebellion. A petition from Somerset East of July 1901 requesting the suspension of the constitution stated, "that the settlement which must follow the proclamation of peace should be succour from the rancour and race feeling which has permeated the political life of the country; we fear that the grave error in passing the Treason Bill may through the power of the Bond be repeated".¹⁴

Other petitions from Worcester and Caledon, also asking for the suspension of the Constitution, stated that the "Bond had been the training school of tens of thousands of so-called burgher sedition-mongers and rebels who have tried to overthrow British influence in South Africa".¹⁵

What was puzzling was that just prior to the war the Afrikaner Bond, led by Jan Hofmeyr before the South African War, was a moderate alliance, a middle party, and a training ground in politics for the Afrikaans community in the Cape Colony for the previous twenty years.¹⁶ Its ideals were to be an organisation in which "all Afrikaners can feel at home, and work together for the good of a united South Africa... in which all who recognize Africa as their fatherland can live together and work as brothers of a

¹² H Leggatt, Wilderness, hleggatt@pixie.co.za, 11 November 2002, re Tienie Wright.

¹³ CAR, A 459, Brabant Collection, 'Diary of Gen EY Brabant, pp189-190.

¹⁴ SA, FK 807, signed by RB Robertson and 25 other men from Somerset East and an identical petition signed by James Collett and 65 other men, from the Graaff-Reinet and Jansenville district, July 1901.

¹⁵ CAR, PMO 83, No86, letter forwarded from DAAG Cape Colonial District, January 1902.

¹⁶ Green, *Suid-Afrika in Wording*, p174.

single house". The Bond wanted South Africa to prosper, not through trade and factories, but through agriculture and animal husbandry. Its goal, in conjunction with other branches of the Bond, was to exercise an influence on business and government. The organisation intended to strive for the development of a southern Africa and a national identity. Dutch was used because the majority of the members understood it.¹⁷

By 1898 there were about six branches of the Bond per district, (one for each ward) and 39 District Committees.¹⁸ The minutes of Bond meetings at Hopetown, Colesberg and Richmond during the 1890s deal mainly with farming matters; rinderpest regulations, the protection of game and protests against the compulsory dipping of sheep to eradicate the scab mite.¹⁹ Why then all the suspicion about such a blameless organisation?

Origins of the Afrikaner Bond

The Afrikaner Bond had undergone a metamorphosis since Rev Stephanus du Toit, minister in Paarl, had proposed the establishment of a bitterly anti-British organisation in 1879. The original articles published in *De Patriot* lampooned Englishmen as soakers (drunks), robbers (shop keepers that robbed the Afrikaner), and reds (soldiers) who were frightened once they had seen how the Boers could shoot. The tone of the pamphlet was offensive to English readers as it denigrated the English civilization, which it described as consisting of canteens, hotels and broken bottles. The English language was called gibberish, and, according to Du Toit, it was a disgrace for the Afrikaner to speak it.²⁰ Sections of the document would today be classed as 'hate speech', and created the impression that there was bitter hatred between English and Dutch colonists in the Cape Colony. But that was hardly the case. Du Toit urged the Afrikaners to boycott British business, not to sell property to the English, to start their own bank, prepare war materials, suggested the Transvaal buy field guns and published directions for making homemade ammunition. Despite all this many of his ideas had merit as he suggested that Dutch be spoken not only in Parliament, but also in the Courts, in public offices, in the Churches and in the schools.

Du Toit's pamphlet was translated into English for the first time and reprinted over twenty years later in April 1900 in Grahamstown. Josiah Slater's 'Journal' produced 5,000 copies of *The Birth of the Bond*; the original Dutch text was subtitled: *De Tranvaalse Oorlog which proves beyond doubt how deep-laid and well planned had been the plotting of the Africander Party to overthrow British supremacy in*

¹⁷ Walker, *The History of Southern Africa*, p389; Hofmeyr, *The Life of Jan Hendrik Hofmeyr (Onze Jan)*, pp196-197.

¹⁸ Davenport, *The Afrikaner Bond*, p397, see map.

¹⁹ CAR, A 434, Van der Merwe, Minute book of Uitvlug branch of the Africander Bond, Richmond 1882-1914; CAR, A 336, Minute book of the Suidmiddelveld branch of the Hopetown Bond; CAR, A 933, Minute Book of Colesberg Bond Branch also deals with similar farming colonial politics.

²⁰ J Slater, *The Birth of the Bond*. A translation from a Dutch Pamphlet entitled *De Transvaalse Oorlog*, pp1-24.

South Africa. A commentary added by Theophilus Lyndall Schreiner, WP Schreiner's brother, quoted statements rejected twenty years before. "The Afrikaner Bond," said Schreiner, "has been most active and most pernicious in its efforts and inference and existence because of the energy of evil. The war was the result of the influence of the Bond," he insisted.²¹ By 1900, the suspicion about the Bond spread rapidly among the military and the loyalists most likely helped on by the propaganda. So many believed that the Afrikaner Bond was involved with invasion strategies of the Boer Republics, that it was referred to as the Pan-Afrikaner conspiracy, dismissed as a myth by Hofmeyr.²² Liberals Leonard Courtney and Cronwright Schreiner letters of protest appeared in *The Times* of London. They protested that the original pamphlet was written in 1882 and that the present leader, Mr Jan Hofmeyr, had refused to join the Bond while such anti-English sentiments were entertained. Under Hofmeyr the Afrikaner Bond started afresh in the Cape Colony, free from the taint of anti-English objections, they insisted.²³ *The Times* dismissed the protests that a translation of the Afrikaner Bond pamphlet was doing great damage remarking 'it is rudimentary among conspirators, who know the business, to combine an open and a secret movement'.²⁴ The printing of the English text was pernicious and explained why newcomers to the military and South Africa viewed the Afrikaner Bond as the snake in the grass, ready to strike the unwary.

According to Green, President Kruger's Government had also rejected Du Toit's concept constitution, which was hardly surprising, as he was not one to suffer competition gladly.²⁵ The President of the Orange Free State, JH Brand, wrote a diplomatic letter to the Smithfield Afrikaner Bond in 1881 in which he said he 'entertained grave doubts about the Bond after studying the constitution, as it appeared desirous of exalting itself above the established Government'.²⁶ There were no branches of the Afrikaner Bond in the Boer Republics when war broke out.²⁷ Davenport has ignored the impact of the translation of Du Toit's pamphlet in his study of the *Afrikaner Bond* and Tamarkin only referred to the publication as radical and fiery stuff, and commented that the Bond was to be an ethnically inclusive rather than an exclusive organisation.²⁸ However it did great damage.

In 1899 as tensions came to a head between the Imperial Authority and the South African Republic, Hofmeyr tried unsuccessfully to mediate with the Transvaal Government over the thorny question of the *Uitlander's* voting rights. He was not a military man, and in his dealings appeared to be

²¹ Theophilus Lyndall Schreiner, *Afrikaner Bond. Other Causes of the War*, p19.

²² Van der Merwe, *The Life of Jan Hendrik Hofmeyr*, p531 refers to the myth of the Pan-Afrikaner conspiracy.

²³ The letters to *The Times* bound with the pamphlet at the Cory Library as well as a sceptical leader from *The Times*, 11 April 1900, which said that it was rudimentary for conspirators to combine an open and a secret movement.

²⁴ *The Times*, 11 April 1900.

²⁵ Green, *Suid-Afrika in Wording*, p173.

²⁶ Fraser, *Episodes in my Life*, p82. The Smithfield branch spelt its name differently to all others.

²⁷ TRH Davenport, *The Afrikaner Bond; The History of a South African Political Party, 1880-1911*, p397, See map.

²⁸ Tamarkin, *Cecil John Rhodes and the Cape Afrikaner*, p53.

more anxious to appease Kruger than recognise that the Transvaal was clearly steering towards war.²⁹ A prominent Zeerust farmer went to Mafeking in September 1899 and pleaded that Hofmeyr and Schreiner should advise the President to close his ears to disloyal Hollanders and give in to the just demands of Great Britain. There was great anxiety in the district, he said, as they knew if the war came all their stock would be commandeered, and they feared they would come to ruin and lose their country.³⁰

Clashes in the Bond Ministry

It is easy to take Hofmeyr to task for failing to speak out on the dangers that an armed incursion would bring to Bond members who lived on the colonial frontiers with the Boer Republics. Hofmeyr must have been aware that Bondsmen in the frontier districts were crying out for help to defend themselves. However he was not in the Cabinet, and certainly the Bond's newcomers, Dr T te Water and A Herholdt, seemed to have had little impact on the other four independent Cabinet members who did not have a track record of being team players. There was no love lost between dour Hofmeyr and paradoxical Merriman as their personal clashes had led to the resignation of Hofmeyr almost twenty years before.³¹ Sauer and Merriman usually backed each other; Sauer, in particular, was accused of running with the hares and hunting with the hounds.³² Whatever feelings there might have been between Attorney General Richard Solomon and Dr Te Water, they had obviously so deteriorated that by March 1900 Solomon referred to Te Water in scurrilous terms as 'that filthy brute Te Water'.³³ Prior to the outbreak of war the correspondent, Steevens, visited the Legislative Assembly in Cape Town and described the interminable wrangling that went on, remarking wryly that in the Assembly, if nowhere else, rumbled the menace of coming war.³⁴ It is hardly surprising that this disparate cabinet could not act jointly in time of crisis.

When Parliament prorogued in 1899 a meeting of the Bond was called; Hofmeyr urged each MLA to return to his district and do his utmost to keep everybody true to his allegiance.³⁵ This was easier said than done, as the pressures on these men, faced with constituencies in turmoil, were enormous. Three members of the Bond in the Legislative Council, JF du Toit (Midland Circle), DP van der Heever and PB van Rhyn (North-eastern Circle), were investigated on various treason charges. The Attorney General refused to press charges against Du Toit and Van Rhyn; only Van den Heever was suspended as a JP. Of the seven members of the House of Assembly who were investigated, the Attorney General declined to

²⁹ Van der Merwe, *The Life of Jan Hendrik Hofmeyr (Onze Jan)*, p544 to 549.

³⁰ *Colesberg Advertiser*, 8 September 1899, 'Mafeking news'.

³¹ Hofmeyr, *The Life of Jan Hendrik Hofmeyr*, p194.

³² *Oudtshoorn Courant*, 27 November 1901.

³³ Lewsen (ed), *Selections from the Correspondence of John X Merriman, 1899-1905*, p174. R Solomon to JX Merriman, 30 March 1900.

³⁴ Steevens, *From Cape Town to Ladysmith*, p7, Report of 10 October 1899.

³⁵ Hofmeyr, *The Life of Jan Hendrik Hofmeyr*, pp556-557.

prosecute in two cases. No criminal action was taken against Dr te Water, and PJ de Wet MLA for Wodehouse was eventually acquitted by Special Court. A Special Court sentenced CWH Schroeder, MLA for Prieska, to twelve months imprisonment plus a fine of £500 or an additional twelve months for acting on a *Krygsraad* and as a Special JP. J Joubert of Albert and I van der Walt of Colesberg both absconded, which reinforced the ideas of a Bond conspiracy.³⁶

Activities of Griqualand Bond Branches

In Griqualand West there were indications that many branches of the Afrikaner Bond encouraged their members to join the Transvaal forces. (See chapter 5.) After a Bond meeting of Ward 3 in Vryburg district, a deputation was sent to the Transvaal leader, De la Rey, saying they would join the Boer forces if their mortgages were remitted after the war. At Kuruman the Bond was behind the decision to join the Republican forces. Subsequently other meetings in the district passed the same resolution. A counter resolution that they, as British citizens, should remain neutral was thrown out, and Van der Merwe, who proposed it, was forcibly informed that it was a Bond meeting and 'Rhodesmen' were not welcome.³⁷

If the numbers of Bond votes polled in 1898 are compared with the final return of rebels in July 1903, they show strong support of Bond voters for the Boer forces north of the Orange River. In the Barkly West constituencies of Herbert, Hay and Vryburg, 1612 voted for the Bond in 1898 but 2126 voters and non-voters appeared on the final rebel tally. The same applies to Kimberley where the Bond polled 174 votes and 368 rebels appeared later in the final rebel tally for that district. Nobody stood as Bond candidate in Mafeking in 1898 because it was a Progressive stronghold.³⁸

Relationships between loyalist and rebel Bond members in Griqualand West deteriorated early in the war. F Strauss, former Secretary of the *Districts Bestuur*, Barkly West, severed his connection with the Bond whom he said incited people to rebellion. He and ES du Toit were arrested by the Boers and kept handcuffed for 29 days in their laager near Kimberley. Cmdt Wessels released them and sent them home after he could find nothing incriminating against them. Later they appeared before Judge Hertzog who deported Strauss as a prisoner to Pretoria. He was only released when Lord Roberts' force occupied the capital. Mr J Olivier of Barkly West, who supported Strauss' statements, said the Bond and the Dutch Reformed Church did nothing to stop people rebelling, and instead used their influence to assist the enemy. Not all Boer commandants were keen to recruit colonists, and one of them warned a group that if they fought with him, they would be considered rebels by their own government. JP van Niekerk of Hay

³⁶ CAR, AG 2051, Miscellaneous.

³⁷ *Conference of Loyalists*, p56.

³⁸ *George and Knysna Herald*, 14 September 1898, Bond and Progressive election results.

alleged that the Boers had sentenced him and his brother to death. They were to be executed at Fourteen Streams, but when this was found to be in British hands, they were escorted to the prison in Pretoria from where they were eventually released.³⁹

The most prominent branch of the Bond south of the Orange River was at Burghersdorp where the organisation had been founded in 1881. In view of the rising tension Hofmeyr asked the Albert Branch to cancel a meeting planned for 9 June 1899 where the Transvaal question was to have been discussed but it was held nevertheless. They also passed a resolution that the Imperial Government was in danger of taking unjust and unrighteous actions against the Transvaal Republic. The hope was expressed that the conference in Bloemfontein would remove the differences of opinions.⁴⁰

Surprisingly the local officers in the Bond in Burghersdorp did not play a leading part in the rebellion neither did they invite the Free State commandos into their town. The town's leader, Professor Jan Lion Cachet of the Theological Seminary, a man of great standing, was opposed to the commandeering by Cmdt Olivier and said firmly that he was a law-abiding subject of the Queen.⁴¹ Cachet was against the *Wapenschouw* planned for November 1899. When war broke out the committee, consulted the Prime Minister's Office and cancelled the event. On Cachet's insistence the local committee also had little contact with Cmdt Olivier, who brushed them aside and ignored their protests when he commenced commandeering. Cachet was investigated on a charge of High Treason in June 1901. Witnesses stated he had called the invasion and commandeering by the OFS forces a tactical blunder, and was opposed to people being deceived into believing that they were Free State burghers. He was convinced if the Berkshire Regiment had not been withdrawn from Naauwpoort and Stormberg, the Free State commandos would not have entered Burghersdorp. Charges against Cachet were withdrawn.⁴²

Prior to the war the Theological seminary students' nationalistic statements in *De Studente Blad* were widely quoted to show how bellicose they were, although it is not clear if colonists, Free Staters or Transvalers wrote the articles. Micheal Jacobus Pretorius, a Burghersdorp student captured by Monro's Column in September 1901, was the only rebel in the 'Rebel Record' who was listed as a student from the Seminary.⁴³

³⁹ *Conference of Loyalists*, pp4 & 17.

⁴⁰ *Cape Argus*, 9 June 1899.

⁴¹ Steevens, *From Cape Town to Ladysmith*, pp21-24.

⁴² CAR, AG 3387, Albert, Preliminary Investigations in charges of High Treason; Williams, *Record of the Cape Mounted Riflemen*, p58.

⁴³ CAR, AG 2095, Magistrate's list of people who have joined the enemy from Albert; CAR, AG 2109, Absconded Rebel list; *Frontier Guardian*, 26 September 1901; Shearing, 'Rebel Record'.

Comparison between Bond votes in 1898 and rebel tally of 1903

While there was strong Bond support for the second invasion north of the Orange River, Bond support does not seem to have been as strong a factor in the Cape Colony proper. Demographics were probably a factor. Rebellion was at its highest in constituencies nearest the Boer Republics and along routes that the Free State commandos followed. For instance Paarl, neighbour to Cape Town and a district that the Boer commandos did not visit, polled 2,296 Bond votes in 1898, while the final total of rebels for that constituency was six.⁴⁴

The Bond members were blamed for the rebellion during the first invasion; however when the final rebel statistics of 1903 are compared to Bond votes polled in the election before the war, the results were nothing like they were rumoured to be. In the Albert constituency the final rebel tally of voters and non-voters was 976 or only 32.5% of 3,004 Bond votes polled in 1898. In Aliwal North the final rebel tally of voters and non-voters was 975 or 69.8% of the 1,396 Bond votes polled the previous year. At Wodehouse, the final rebel tally of 744 - also of voters and non-voters - was 34.4% of the 2,162 Bond votes polled at the last election. At Colesberg the same applies, the final rebel tally was 299 or 49.3% of the 606 Bond votes polled in 1898.

Commandeering south of the Orange River was a haphazard affair that did not make use of Afrikaner Bond membership lists. Instead the Field Cornets that joined the Republican forces, commandeered using the ward voting registers kept by them. For instance Johannes Hendrik Lubbe of Driefontein, Aliwal North, became a Veld Cornet under the Free State Government and ordered all Barnardspruit Ward men to meet in Jamestown on 13 January 1900, where he issued them with a Martini-Henry rifle and ammunition, and saw that they served in the commando and tried to stop them deserting. Still Andries Schoeman, who had been commandeered, went home after standing guard for three nights. When Lubbe ordered him back to his post he refused as his wife had recently died, and he put his case to *Landdrost* Potgieter at Aliwal North, who referred him to Cmdt Gustav van Aardt at Stormberg. Schoeman was given a month's leave.⁴⁵ Studying the numerous affidavits by loyal Afrikaners who refused to leave their farms, such as Jacobus Visser Vickers of Orpendale, Alwyn Lewis Schlebusch of De Kraal, Benjamin Vickers of the Farm Wepener and Jacobus Adriaan Vorster of Christamentfontein, it became obvious it was a time of great confusion, and many older colonists were reluctant to do commando duty.

⁴⁴ *George and Knysna Herald*, 14 September 1898; CAR, AG 2106, Returns of Rebels for 1903.

⁴⁵ CAR, AG 3387, Preliminary Investigations into Class 1 Cases charged with High Treason. Lubbe was sentenced to six months imprisonment and fined £500 or a further one year's imprisonment by the Special Court sitting in Aliwal North on 17-4-1902.

Had local branches of the Afrikaner Bond really been involved in a mass conspiracy, the whole method of the commandeering might have been more efficient.⁴⁶

The only district south of the Orange River where a branch of the Afrikaner Bond openly organised to join the Free State Boers was at Barkly East. According to Merriman 24 out of 33 Barkly East Bond officials either joined the rebellion or assisted the invaders. This evidence was used to support the contention of many opponents that the organisation as a whole was basically disloyal.⁴⁷ In November 1899 JW Sauer, Member for Aliwal North and Commissioner of Lands, was sent to Wodehouse to persuade the district to remain loyal to the Crown. He held a loyalist meeting in Dordrecht appealing for calm, and then wrote to Cmdt Olivier at Barkly East and pleaded with him not to invade the Dordrecht district. According to Munnik, who was with Olivier, they received a request from Sauer begging them not to invade the Dordrecht district, and in reply informed him that they would arrest any commissioners that came into the district and would send them [as prisoners] to Bloemfontein.⁴⁸ Whether Sauer was too ashamed or too proud to reveal the threat is open to speculation, but the story spread that he asked the Free Staters to occupy the district.

By the time Sauer (whose own brother, Willem Sauer of Mount Newton Barkly East was found guilty of High Treason) reached Queenstown, he was so jittery that he made a very weak speech with the result that an article about his meeting asked furiously, "Is he Pro-Boer or Pro-British?" His address was called, "a dose of soothing syrup to the colonial Boers who had carried out their Bond principles to the logical conclusions and gone over to the enemy". He said it was not for him to say if the present war was just or unjust. Because he pleaded circumstances had occurred that he never thought could or would take place, he did not think the Imperial authorities would be hard or cruel on commandeered men.⁴⁹ Sauer's reputation suffered, and his statement probably encouraged the doubtful to rebel, which they did a few days later in Dordrecht.

On the outbreak of the war the news that a new branch of the Afrikaner Bond was to be inaugurated at Sandflats near Alexandria in October 1899, caused the local magistrate to contact the Law Department in alarm, and warn them that Bondsmen, D and H Moolman of Somerset East and J Lombard of Albany were expected to address a meeting shortly. The Magistrate was worried people from other districts would probably stir up strife. However Moolman informed the Law Department that due to the fluid situation the meeting was cancelled.⁵⁰

⁴⁶ CAR, AG 3388, Preliminary Investigations in Cases of High Treason, Aliwal North.

⁴⁷ Davenport, *The Afrikaner Bond*, p211.

⁴⁸ Munnik, *Memoirs of Senator Munnik*, p165.

⁴⁹ *Grocott's Daily Mail Weekly War Summary*, 7 December 1899.

⁵⁰ CAR, PMO 74, Folio 228, Afrikaner Bond. Telegrams 19 to 26 October 1899.

After the collapse of the first rebellion there was an ongoing argument throughout the Colony on the punishment that rebels should receive for their actions. It led to a long-standing Parliamentary crisis over a suitable punishment of rebels who were found guilty of High Treason. Sampson, member for Albany, said there was nothing in the evidence to show that the Bond as a body, not as an individual, had ever broken the law.⁵¹ The Bondsmen, such as NF de Waal, argued that leaders should be punished and not the rank and file.⁵² For the Afrikaner Bond as a party, the Indemnity and Special Tribunals had distinct implications. The three key constituencies in the Bond were Albert with AS du Plessis (Joubert had absconded), Aliwal North where Sauer and JNP Botha stood to lose out and Wodehouse where Merriman and De Wet stood to lose their majority. However the failure of the Ministry to make a deal with Chamberlain, whereby only the leaders would be punished and the rank and file would get amnesty, led to a split in the ministry, the ultimate collapse of the South African Party and Schreiner's resignation on 13 June 1900.⁵³ Te Water, with Merriman and Sauer, continued to state in public that the Imperial Government should not tell a self-governing colony what sentences it should hand down to convicted colonists.

Te Water was popular with Bondsmen in Graaff-Reinet, but his loyalty to the crown became suspect when it came to light that he had foolishly sent the secret telegraphic code of the Cape Ministry to President Steyn towards the end of May 1899. The note said it was 'quite possible that you will have to communicate with us, and the telegraph service is not entirely to be trusted.'⁵⁴ Te Water continued making fiery speeches in the Cape Colony during 1900 that were reported in *Onze Courant* that enhanced his reputation as a leading Bondsman. In Te Water's papers is the draft of a speech he gave the Afrikaner Bond at Aberdeen on 1 December, just prior to the Second Invasion. In it his fury over the "scandalous Parliamentary session of 1900" was evident. The Colonial Government had the right to make laws, to defend itself without outside interference, and under Martial Law innocent colonists were being thrown into gaol on false evidence merely because they had Dutch surnames, he said. Martial Law was proclaimed solely to seek revenge on the Afrikaner, and so forth.⁵⁵

In that era a parliamentarian had enormous social standing and a doctor even more so. The impact of his speech in the middle of a war on the local people cannot be overestimated. There is no evidence that Te Water was in a conspiracy with Steyn or invited Kritzingen to invade the Midlands two weeks later.⁵⁶ But his words fell on fertile ground as 35 colonists joined the Free State forces in Aberdeen six weeks later. V/C Pieter Wolfaardt also deposed after he was captured with Lötter that he had read Te Water's

⁵¹ Cape of Good Hope, *Debates of the House of Assembly 1900*, p140

⁵² Cape of Good Hope, *Debates of the House of Assembly 1900*, p196

⁵³ Walker, *WP Schreiner, a South African*, pp230,233; CAR, AG 2106, Returns of Rebels, June 1903.

⁵⁴ Headlam, *The Milner Papers*, I, pp395-396, Te Water to Steyn, 27 May 1899.

⁵⁵ CAR, A 467, Te Water papers, Folio 93, Report to Afrikaner Bond, Aberdeen, 1 December 1900.

⁵⁶ CAR, AG 2095, Magistrate's list of people who joined the enemy from Aberdeen.

speeches, and but for them would never have been influenced to throw in his lot with the Republics.⁵⁷ Once Martial Law was declared in the Cape Colony in December 1900, Te Water was advised to take an extended trip.⁵⁸ He left for overseas just before the lawyer Edwin Tennant arrived in Graaff-Reinet to hunt for evidence against him on Milner's instructions.⁵⁹

Throughout 1900 vociferous protests against the way war was being waged were made at the provincial meetings of the Afrikaner Bond. Meetings were held at Somerset East in March 1900 and in Graaff-Reinet in May. A women's congress was held at Somerset East in October 1900 where a message from Olive Schreiner was read, and in Paarl in November where Mrs Koopmans de Wet sent a message denouncing farm burnings and pleading for an end to the war, with the Republics retaining their independence.⁶⁰ But it was the huge meeting held at Worcester on 6 December that was to have critical implications for the congress-goers. While the Worcester meeting was not organised by the Bond as such, it was openly critical about the way in which the war was being waged. It was an embarrassment to the British Government, and those who attended it started 1901 with a black mark against their names.

Two major incursions by Free State forces into the Cape Colony occurred only ten days after the Worcester Congress. The two events were probably not connected as De Wet was planning to make an inroad into the Cape Colony as early as 11 November 1900.⁶¹ The invaders were hoping that all the aired outrage would fuel a rising this time. In Kritzingers's Commando 34 recruits joined with Francois Retief, who had been at the Worcester Congress. Nevertheless the Free Staters, under Kritzingers, were disappointed when they reached Oudtshoorn. Matt Zondagh of Avontuur heard that the Republicans were sure the Afrikaner Bond had invited them into the Colony, and they had expected far more to enter their ranks.⁶²

In expounding a conspiracy theory it is possible to surmise that the speeches at the Worcester Congress and others were synchronised to occur before the invasion, and there was widespread belief among the military that somehow the Afrikaner Bond was behind the latest flare-up in the war. But the sudden appearance of the Free State commandos in the Cape Colony came as a surprise to many.

A shopkeeper from Aberdeen, J Fourie, said when Martial Law was declared there on 16 December 1900, that many villagers thought the proclamation was unnecessary, as they could not believe that commandos would reach their village as the borders were too well guarded. They were amazed at the

⁵⁷ Smith, *A History of Graaff-Reinet District*, p340.

⁵⁸ CAR, A 467, Te Water papers, Folio 93, Report to Aberdeen Afrikaner Bond, 1 December 1900; *Eastern Province Herald*, 9-8-1900, 'Dr Te Water is one of the gutters which feed the stream of malignant lies of which complaint has been made...'.
⁵⁹ Shute's diary, 21 May 1901, handwritten note added by Shute in 1905.

⁶⁰ Davenport, *The Afrikaner Bond*, p 227.

⁶¹ De Wet, *Three Years War*, p219.

⁶² Zondagh, *The diary of Mrs Matt Zondagh*, 2 February 1901, private archives of Mr Errol Zondagh, George. Mrs Zondagh of Avontuur had spoken to farmer John Robertson, who had been captured by Kritzingers's Commando.

appearance of the commando in their village.⁶³ Dr Morrow, who arrived as a locum a few days before Scheepers' Commando entered Uniondale, said the people believed that Boers would never come so far south, but when a rumour spread that armed Boers were approaching, many buried their valuables and cleared off to the coast.⁶⁴

On the other hand the British and colonial troops were dealing with a rebellion under peculiar circumstances. They were wearing khaki and were easily identified, while the rebels and the Republicans in civilian dress were not. Once Martial Law was in force throughout the Cape Colony with the exception of the ports and the black territories, commandants were appointed in towns and villages to uphold the law from December 1900 to June 1902. One of the tasks of the Area Administrators and Station Commandants was to establish who were loyalists and who were the leaders of the rebellion in disguise in their districts. The majority of the staff appointments went to men from British regiments whose knowledge of the Afrikaner was slight, while some staff appointments went to colonials, including Capt E Ayliff of the Cape Police, Officer Commanding area No 10 at De Aar. Other appointments went to Australians and strangers such as Lieut GM Wigram of the Mounted Infantry of Ceylon, who was the Jansenville Station Commandant. By far the most notorious was the Commandant of Somerset East Capt Llewellyn Llewellyn, a Welshman whose insults were endured with Christian fortitude by the older Rev JH Hofmeyer, who had been minister of the Dutch Reformed Church since 1867.⁶⁵

Deportation

As the rebellion spread through the Midlands in 1901 the persons who came under the deepest suspicion were the Afrikaners who belonged to the Bond.⁶⁶ Gerrit van Heerden a Bondsman at Aberdeen was arrested for treasonable practice, and his offer of £10,000 bail was refused. He was the first person to be gaoled under Martial Law in Aberdeen and six weeks later was released without being charged.⁶⁷ The 2nd Battalion Coldstream Guards arrived in Graaff-Reinet on 1 January 1901 under Maj Herbert Shute, who was appointed to administer Martial Law, and had been instructed by Col Douglas Haig to "take severe measures". On 19 January Shute rounded up sixteen Class 2 rebels and "burghers on parole" and sent them as "undesirables" to a camp in Port Elizabeth. The selection of these people rested with the Vigilante Committee of Graaff-Reinet with Sanford, the Editor of the *Graaff-Reinet Advertiser*, in the

⁶³ US, Fourie, 23/1 and 23/2, 'Geburtenissen te Aberdeen en Omgewing Gedurende de Oorlog Operaties'.

⁶⁴ Morrow, *Uniondale, 1901, A memento of the Anglo-Boer War*, p2.

⁶⁵ John Smith (ed), *Somerset-Oos, Somerset East 150, 1825-1975*, Port Elizabeth, 1974, p67.

⁶⁶ CAR, D/D 6/102, Cape Colony District, 23 January 1902, list of Staff appointments. The appointment name, rank, corps and date of appointment is listed. The majority of the officers (station and area commandant) were British. The Australians and Colonials were in the minority.

⁶⁷ *Somerset Budget*, 1 February 1901.

chair and Tennant, Intelligence Officer, as adviser. Shute's attitude towards the Afrikaner colonists and the Bond is expressed in his comment: "the deportation of these suspects was the cause of great political animosity at Cape Town. They were most salutary as the Dutchman, like the Irish, are led by the nose by agitators and once they are removed they are easily governed instead of being hoodwinked by reckless members of the Afrikaner Bond, supported by the Dutch Reformed Church".⁶⁸

FR Davel of Afrikanderskloof, Bethesda Road gave a detailed account of treatment meted out to an Afrikaner Bondsman as a result of attending the Worcester Congress. Davel, a leader in his community, had served in the Sneeuberg Rangers in the Gaika-Galeka War about twenty years before. He had been chosen as a delegate to attend the congress at Worcester on behalf of Nieu-Bethesda and to voice his protest at the way the women and children were being held in concentration camps. Davel said he went to the Congress at Worcester reluctantly, as he feared no good would come out of it. He reported back at a local Bond meeting at Nieu-Bethesda on 15 December, unaware that Free State Commandos were crossing the Orange River. A fortnight later on 31 December 1900 two members of Kritzinger's Commando who had got as far south as Nieu Bethesda by that time, appeared and asked to 'buy' two of his horses. Davel refused, and they went away.

Because he was suspected of receiving special treatment from the Boers he was arrested on 18 January 1901 and lodged in gaol; he was released ten days later. On 18 February 1901 he was called into Graaff-Reinet and was again gaoled, and eventually on payment of £500 in cash and a further guarantee of £1,000, was allowed to live in his house in Graaff-Reinet until the end of the war. He was not allowed visitors unless a permit was given, and all his requests to be brought to trial were ignored.⁶⁹

Kitchener, Milner and the Colonial Government agents searched high and low to get hard evidence that the Afrikaner Bond as an organization was involved in treasonable practises. According to an agent's report DA van den Heever, the MLA for Albert, and Jacobus Graaff visited President Kruger in Europe in December 1900 and told him that a rising of the Cape colonists was imminent. He also alleged that several colonial MLAs visited Cape Town and returned to their constituents and urged them to keep the war going. Here he mentioned JA Smuts of Malmesbury and Belligan of Uitenhage.⁷⁰ Although the bulk of the agent's suspicions of July 1901 were largely hearsay and only talk, he showed prescience about Smuts. In January 1902 Gen Smuts sent his brother-in-law PS Krige, HCW Vermaas and two others on a secret expedition to his father Jacobus Smuts, the MLA for Malmesbury, to borrow money and to

⁶⁸ Shute's diary, Graaff-Reinet, 19 January 1901.

⁶⁹ Davel, 'Herrinerige van Frans Davel', p73, Archives of the Graaff-Reinet Museum. Copy of a statement presented to the Jameson Ministry in June 1906.

⁷⁰ CAR, PMO 81, Agents report 8 July 1901, included Confidential Despatch from General Officer Commanding Cape Colony District.

hear news about the state of public opinion in England and the Cape.⁷¹ The expedition was successful and the party returned to the Smuts' Commando with the funds, and nobody was any the wiser on the colonial side. Smuts senior's story became an example of filial love in years to come, and luckily for the family, not evidence in a high treason case.

Steyn rejects petition

In July 1901, after a number of buildings in Murraysburg were burnt down on Cmdt GJ Scheepers' orders, there was a mass exodus from the village. The unrest caused 240 members of the Dutch Reformed Church in Graaff-Reinet, mostly Bondsmen, signed a petition asking President Steyn to recall the commandos to the Free State. The Rev C Murray and JT Botha journeyed to the Free State and eventually reached Steyn and De Wet and handed the petition as a message from the Afrikaner *volk* of the Cape Colony. In it they said that they were all under pressure from Martial Law, and they failed to see how the ruination of the Cape Colony could affect the eventual outcome of the war.

Murray and Botha met Steyn just before Commandant Kritzinger was defeated at Ruiterskraal. Steyn was arrogant and scorned the plight of the Cape colonist and said the raids were necessary to scatter English troops. He said he would only withdraw the commandos if the independence of the Republics were acknowledged. The disappointed clergy asked Steyn if it was right to ruin the Cape Afrikaner; and he retorted that they had the remedy in their own hands and should rise up like men and join the commandos.⁷²

By mid 1901 the suspicion that it was the Afrikaner Bond as such who were organising rebellion waned, and the military put pressure on the families and sympathisers of the men who had joined the commandos. As Martial Law bit deeper and farmers were gaoled and fined for assisting the Boers, it took a bold man to feed them openly. The Cradock Magistrate reported to the Law Department in September 1901 that 23 persons, whose sons had joined the enemy, were arrested on orders of Col Haig, placed in the lock-up and later moved to the Cradock Gaol.⁷³ In order to control civilians it became common practise to deport the 'undesirables' with their families to other centres, and by September 1901, 144 had been deported to Port Alfred, 34 from Graaff-Reinet alone. Ten people had been deported from Burghersdorp and in ones and twos sent to Kingwilliams Town, East London, Dordrecht, Aliwal North and Queenstown. Ten individuals were deported from Malmesbury to Ceres while ten others were deported from Ceres to

⁷¹ OJO Ferreira, *Memoirs of General Ben Brouwer*, p236.

⁷² The petition dated 17 July 1901, with travel documents, are in Reinet House, Graaff-Reinet; *SA News Weekly*, 12 November 1901, 'De Wets Mood has changed'.

⁷³ CAR, AG 2085, Folio 36, 6 September 1901, Cradock: arrests made by military.

Malmesbury, as 'undesirables'.⁷⁴ In the return of six people deported to Port Alfred from Bedford, four were identified as delegates at the Worcester Congress.⁷⁵

The post of administrator of Graaff-Reinet during 1901 and 1902 had been no sinecure. Between January 1901 and May 1902 there was only January 1902, when Boer forces were not being pursued through the Graaff-Reinet and Aberdeen districts, and they could not live on fresh air. To prevent rebellion, Shute insisted that a sum of between £25 and £250 be lodged with the Standard Bank Graaff-Reinet in the name of each suspect, giving drawing power to the Magistrate and himself. The Magistrate assessed the exact sum, and this was forfeit if the suspect rebelled. The total amount involved has not been traced but only 87 Graaff-Reinet men rebelled, far fewer than 222 in Cradock, 299 in Colesberg and 145 in Aberdeen.⁷⁶

Politics and the Afrikaner Bond went by the board as the war of attrition continued and meetings were forbidden under Martial Law. Life became a matter of survival. By the end of 1901 many farmers in the Midlands and southern Cape would have simply nothing to do with the commandos who got them into trouble; only their families would help the rebel, and many of them went to gaol or Port Alfred for that. In 1902 a farmer wrote it was nothing but drought and war.

For all the fact that they were unable to hold public meetings, the Afrikaner Bond was still regarded as a force to reckon with. The colonial Governor, Hely-Hutchinson, wrote to a friend that Kitchener was very unsound on the question of offering amnesty to rebels, and he feared that amnesty would strengthen the Bond, and encourage agitation in the future. He thought that the knowledge that Kitchener was in favour of amnesty had made the rebels hold out, hoping it would be offered. Steyn had promised them that they would come to no harm, and could now boast he had fulfilled his promise, said Hely-Hutchinson.⁷⁷

Not everybody remained a Bond member. PJ Badenhorst of Britstown said he had been a prominent member of the Bond, and had been among many, who had left the organisation and were now hated, despised and persecuted. He was certain that the majority of people who rebelled had made their mind up to do that during the early stages of the war. Mr Frans van der Merwe of the Calvinia district spoke with sympathy of the lot of the so-called Bastards in their district. When the war came into their district in 1901 they offered their services to the Government, and 600 of them were enrolled under white officers as border guards and scouts, and did good work. Fifty of the Border Scouts held the Boers off at Tontelboskolk, and though they tried every means they could to drive them from their forts, the Boers had to give up the attack. The Boers had destroyed everything belonging to these so-called Bastards, and they

⁷⁴ CAR, AG 2085, persons deported to other centres.

⁷⁵ CAR, AG 2085, Returns of persons deported from Bedford to Port Alfred, 31 August 1901.

⁷⁶ CAR, AG 2106, Returns of Rebels, June 1903.

⁷⁷ NAR, FK 847, 18 March 1902, Letter from Hely-Hutchinson.

would not get help from the Bond farmers because they had helped the English, according to Van der Merwe.

People like Shute, who had been born in India and steeped in the conspiracies of the Orient, saw plots everywhere. He was responsible for a lot of misery. A Martial Law Board was created in October 1901 to investigate complaints regarding the implementation of Martial Law in the Colony except where monetary compensation was claimed.⁷⁸ Shute himself added a note in 1905 to his diary of 25 February 1902 that he was summoned to appear before them. He was under investigation for four hours as 70 complaints were made against him. There is nothing in the diary about the complaints, only that when he went to see Sprigg, the Prime Minister refused to receive him.⁷⁹

The war ended before Shute was able to unravel what he called 'the Bond conspiracy', which he was sure was behind the rebellion in the Midlands. He was convinced that P Michau, a Bondsman from Cradock, was about to confess, but had changed his mind when he realised that peace was imminent. Shute's 'ringleaders' were Te Water, JF du Toit, De Waal, Secretary of the Bond, Pretorius MLC and others. If only, lamented Shute, he could have got enough evidence to convict them of High Treason the disloyalty would have ceased forever.⁸⁰ Te Water certainly raised Maj Shute's ire; he was still trying to convince Chamberlain unsuccessfully of his treachery when the Coldstream Guards returned to London months after the war was over.⁸¹

It is just not possible to draw up a final list of Bond members convicted of High Treason. In order to unravel the confusion that existed between rebels of similar surnames, lists of rebels convicted of High Treason who were thought to be officials of the Afrikaner Bond were sent to magistrates in 1902 for comment. From the replies it appears that out of 176 Bond Officials 112 had been convicted of High Treason. In another document the Attorney General's Office also stated that 22 Bond Officials were convicted of High Treason. However there are surprising omissions in the lists as Bond members sentenced under Military Courts do not appear; and neither were there lists of convicted Bond members for Barkly West or Albert.⁸²

Had more of Schreiner's cabinet in 1899 been Bond members and had a more dominant position in the cabinet, they might have displayed more concern for their members before and after the outbreak of war. Hofmeyr's attempts to broker a peace deal failed. As it was, prejudice against the Bond made the

⁷⁸ CAR, PMO 479, 23 July 1902, statement by Board on its activities: redress through the Board recommendations 46; adjusted without direct intervention 46; cases in which the Board decided not to intervene 219; cases outside the scope of the board 135; cases adjusted owing to Proceedings of Peace 50. Final total 496.

⁷⁹ Shute's diary, 25 February 1902, note added 1905.

⁸⁰ Shute's diary, 31 May 1902, note added 1905.

⁸¹ Shute's diary, 17 October 1902.

⁸² AG 2073, certain officials of the Bond. Lists were sent to various magistrates and they were asked to investigate whether certain convicted rebels were Bond officials. They indicated that 112 were convicted rebels from the total of 176 Bond members that the Law Department had been enquiring about. Letters despatched December 1902.

lives of many of their members much tougher under Martial Law, and they suffered and gained little for being a member of the organisation.

Motion to investigate allegations against the Afrikaner Bond

When the Cape Parliament resumed its sitting in August 1902, NF de Waal, MLA for Colesberg and Secretary of the Bond Provincial Committee, moved a motion that a seven man committee of inquiry into the main allegations against the Afrikaner Bond during the war in the matter involving the receipt of money from foreign sources, conspiracy to abrogate British rule, connivance with the invasion of British territory and encouragement and promotion of rebellious conduct, be established. The newspapers were orchestrating a campaign of vilification, said De Waal, who said it would clear the air if the inquiry were held.⁸³ The Progressive Party from the Prime Minister down was less than enthusiastic. The Suspension crisis barely over, hundreds of rebels were still appearing before the Courts on charges of High Treason. Sprigg would be only one among many Progressives who said that there would be nothing gained by the inquiry, and, as the Government's policy was peace and reconciliation, De Waal asked, after he had aired the matter, to withdraw the motion.⁸⁴ He ignored the request and addressed the house a dozen times during six lengthy and heated debates. De Waal and the President of the Bond, FR Theron of Richmond, aired all their grievances, maintained that they had nothing to hide, and said that their organization had remained loyal throughout the war. As proof of Bond loyalty they cited letters to the Prieska rebels in March 1900 warning them they had been led astray as the Republican cause was hopeless. They also wrote a letter in July 1901 asking all Bond members under arms to surrender, and had always placed themselves at the disposal of the British forces.⁸⁵

Eventually a select committee was nominated under a reluctant Chairman, Col Herbert Tamplin, who had earlier asked that the motion be withdrawn, as nothing would be gained by holding an inquiry.⁸⁶ The committee was barely nominated when they discharged themselves. Col David Harris had disapproved of his appointment, saying the inquiry would be on purely political lines, and V Sampson QC of Albany, who tried to discharge himself when he was appointed, said there was no evidence that they could bring evidence to a court of law against the Bond as an organization.⁸⁷ The Hansard revealed the vagueness of the accusations made in the House against the Bond; and it is not surprising that the leaders of the Bond were as powerless as all other colonial institutions under Martial Law during the war. It was

⁸³ Cape of Good Hope, *Debates of the House of Assembly*, 1902, p104.

⁸⁴ Cape of Good Hope, *Debates of the House of Assembly*, 1902, p176.

⁸⁵ Cape of Good Hope, *Debates of the House of Assembly*, 1902, pp118, 372.

⁸⁶ Cape of Good Hope, *Debates of the House of Assembly*, 1902, p288.

⁸⁷ Cape of Good Hope, *Debates of the House of Assembly*, 1902, pp395-396.

more the organisation's charismatic name that made it an obvious propaganda tool for the Republican forces snatching at any advantage in the Cape Colony, and for the Bond's political opponents in the Progressive Party.⁸⁸

This must be weighed against the fact that had WP Schreiner not been head of the South African Party, backed by the Afrikaner Bond, and had the Bond not been in the ascendancy, the invasion and the consequent rebellion would not have taken such a hold on the country, and many colonist's lives would not have been lost in the civil war that followed.

⁸⁸ Cape of Good Hope, *Debates of the House of Assembly*, 1902, p370. Theron said that in July 1901 a rebel could only be shot, hanged or banished. He did not mention that if a rebel surrendered he would get a year's imprisonment.

CHAPTER 8

PEACE AND AFTERMATH

Peace Negotiations

In May 1902 delegates from the Transvaal and Free State commandos met at Vereeniging, and laid bare the bones of their dire situation after two and a half years of war. Only Gen Smuts arrived from the Cape Colony to attend the proceedings; every other attempt to contact Cmdt Fouché and Gen Malan in the Midlands had failed. A despatch rider reported to Gen French's headquarters at Middelburg that Malan said the summons to attend the peace deliberations were a trap to capture both himself and Fouché, and he threatened to shoot anybody who tried to contact them further. Malan later softened his views and said he would abide by De Wet's decision.¹ Although colonial rebels were debarred from attending as delegates, Cmdt Conroy was very keen to attend, and rode into Britstown on 13 May 1902 under a flag of truce, saying that Gen De Wet had invited him to the conference, but he could not produce an invitation. Because he held a safe-conduct the Commandant reluctantly let him go, as he wanted to arrest him because there were charges pending against Conroy for brutally flogging a number of farmers.²

Gen Louis Botha addressed the Boer delegates and firmly dispelled the old dream still held by some that a rising of the Cape colonists could still occur. No, he said firmly, they must expect nothing from a rebellion in the Cape Colony, as the men were scattered in small groups and achieved nothing. They had to live on people well disposed towards them, and the enemy treated them very harshly if they were captured. Colonists had been hanged. The colonial forces would eventually drive these groups out of the country. Gen Smuts then spoke and supported Botha unequivocally, saying firmly that there would be no general rising in the Cape. He said the British had taken all the horses that could still be used. Therefore it was difficult for the colonists to rise, as mounted commandos were essential to fight in the extensive conditions of the Cape Colony. Smuts said the Cape Colony was perhaps not ripe for these events and they, the Boers, had also made mistakes in their campaign there. The Boers could never sufficiently honour the 3,000 men who joined them; they were heroes who had sacrificed their all for the Boer Republics, but they could not regain independence for them.

Smuts explained that the enemy had made a proposal, coupled with the promise of amnesty for these colonial comrades who had joined them. He feared that if they did not accept the proposal now the

¹ NAR, FK 847, Weekly intelligence report, 25 April 1902; NAR, FK 849 report of 6 May 1902.

² NAR, FK 851, Weekly intelligence report, 17 May 1902.

day would come when they would not be able to rescue the so-called rebels. Then those rebels would have grounds to reproach them that they had sacrificed their interest for what was already a hopeless cause.

Amnesty conditions

Smuts explained further that, according to Lord Milner, the Colonial Governments would determine the treatment of those who had been in rebellion and who now surrendered, according to the laws of the colonies. The following terms would be granted to British subjects of the Cape Colony now in the field, or who had surrendered or been captured since 12 April 1901. On surrender the rank and file would give up their arms and sign an admission before the Resident Magistrate of the district in which they surrendered, acknowledging that they were guilty of High Treason. After that they would not be allowed to register as voters or to vote at any Parliamentary, Divisional Council, or Municipal election. This disfranchisement would only apply to those who had not been found guilty of murder or other acts contrary to usages of civilised warfare. All Justices of the Peace, Field Cornets of the Cape Colony and other persons holding positions under the Government of the Cape Colony, or who occupied the position of commandant of rebel or burgher forces, were to be tried for High Treason before the ordinary courts of the country, or special courts as may be constituted by Law. The punishment for their offence would be left to the discretion of the court, with the proviso that in no case would the death penalty be handed down by the courts.³

Amnesty for the Cape and Natal rebels was one of the issues raised during the abortive Middelburg negotiations between Kitchener and Botha in February 1901. Neither Milner nor Chamberlain accepted the proposal of the Boer leaders that amnesty be automatically granted to all rebels. The situation in the Republics had so deteriorated a year and a half later however that they now had to accept the British Government's proposal that they would grant amnesty to the rank and file, but the rebel leaders would have to face charges of High Treason in court.⁴ Under Smuts his 3,000 rebel force had inflicted more losses than they had suffered, none of his commandos had been captured or even soundly defeated, he had also kept Gen French, his staff and 8,000 troops busy trying to contain him. However his success had to be balanced against the dire situation of the burghers in the Boer republics and the needs of the Boer people.⁵

³ JD Kestell and DE van Velden, *The Peace Negotiations Between the Governments of the South African Republic and the Representatives of the British Government which terminated in the Peace concluded at Vereeniging on the 31st May, 1902*, London, 1912, pp30,60,136-137,190.

⁴ Carver, *The Boer War*, pp218-219; Kestell and Van Velden, *The Peace Negotiations between Boer and Briton in South Africa*, pp136-137.

⁵ Amery (eds), *The Times History*, V, p553.

Reactions to the peace

On Sunday, 1 June 1902 official announcements were made that peace had been signed at church parades in most towns and villages. Tom Murray of Roodebloem, Graaff-Reinet wrote in his diary: "Great news today - The war is over, 'Peace' was declared yesterday... the news seems too good to be true and yet we know it is true, and may the blessing of Peace stay with us forever - many homes are mourning their dear ones, yet all will rejoice that there is Peace".⁶ Murray was a loyalist, who would have been surprised that for some rebels in the northwest Cape peace was the last thing they wanted.

De Kersauson, the Frenchman with Maritz in the northwest Cape, said that after Smuts left O'Okiep for Vereeniging, the Afrikaners who had not taken part in the war, kept asking them for news, but they had no news; nevertheless the people were reassured by their bravery and their calmness. Dancing parties were held in their honour. Their hopes of victory were also strengthened by the behaviour of the enemy who began withdrawing, leaving the villages unguarded to the south. Even the construction of the blockhouses between Victoria Road and Lamberts Bay suddenly stopped.

Maritz did not heed the rumours of an impending peace and massed his troops at Calvinia. He was in the saddle day and night, industriously preparing to march on Cape Town. Reports came in that the enemy were consistently avoiding battle, even with the small bands sent out to open the roads ahead as they prepared to advance. The fateful day, 31 May 1902, dawned without any suspicion on their part that the fate of the republics had been decided.

On 5 June near Van Rhynsdorp Maritz was stopped by a messenger carrying a white flag, who handed him a letter from Gen Kitchener saying that peace had been signed and he asked Maritz to send his commandos to the nearest railway. While Maritz informed all his commandos that the hostilities had ceased, he actually ordered his men to retreat to Bushmanland while he and his staff went to Tontelboschkolk on the Fish River.⁷

Cmdt Bouwer, standing near Urionskraal, wrote on 2 June, 1902 that they had just driven off an attack by 60 men in the coloured forces armed with a gun under Lieut Morris Cohen, and had lost four horses and six saddles; a rebel had been wounded. The sentries then reported that two uniformed mounted men were approaching from the direction of Van Rhynsdorp. It was a Capt Tuson who was escorted in by the sentries and handed over an official message from Col Kavanagh. Tuson was obviously under orders not to announce that the Republican forces had surrendered, but dropped a hint, saying that the message

⁶ Murray, 'The Roodebloem Diaries', 2 June, 1902, private archives of TET Murray, Graaff-Reinet.

⁷ Robert de Kersauson, 'A French Volunteer in the Ranks of the Boers', in *Militaria, Military Historical Periodical*, 6/4, Pretoria, 1976, from *L'Illustration*, LVIII, No 3126, Paris, 1903, entitled 'Un volontaire français dans les rangs boers, le dénouement', translated by C de Jong, p18.

from headquarters puzzled him as it stated, "Peace is signed with the late Republics". Because of the phrase "late Republics" he suspected that the peace was not signed in the favour of the Boers.⁸

Col Kavangh wrote that peace had been declared on 31 May, and that Gen Smuts would be returning shortly to give instructions re the surrender of arms. All hostile operations were to be suspended while the two forces awaited his arrival.⁹ OT de Villiers wrote afterwards that when they first heard the news that peace had been signed they were all happy and excited; then as the days went by they began to have a sense of foreboding. After all, if they had won the war, why was it that the conditions were being kept from them until Gen Smuts returned?¹⁰

Clearly in the vicinity of the Smuts forces the news was kept purposely vague, despite the region being awash with rumour. The Carnarvon Magistrate reported to the Law Department that the Boers were going to the Fish River with the Transvalers. He had met Cmdt Londt and Cmdt Pienaar at Paardevlei, but Londt refused to surrender his commando until the Transvalers had decided what to do.¹¹

Nobody wanted to meet a Boer who thought the war was still on. Not everybody was fortunate; the unsuspecting Colonial Light Horse were attacked, probably by Naser, at Groenberg, Fraserburg on 3 June 1902 and four men were killed and two wounded.¹² In the Eastern Cape peace coincided with five or six feet of snow in the Stormberg region that cut those districts off from the outside world. While the peace snow brought respite to the worn and overgrazed veld, stock losses were high.¹³

Smuts and his brother-in-law, Tottie Krige, returned to the northwest Cape with heavy hearts, knowing they had to convey a message of defeat to the commandos, many of which were still full of fight. Smuts knew that when the Transvalers returned home and saw the devastation and the state of the inhabitants, they would realise that the bitter end had come. But the Cape rebels? Many were isolated *trekboers* who were determined fighters and uncomplaining followers. Would they understand that the Boers in the Republics could fight no more?

Smuts at Soetwater, Calvinia

De Kersauson was with Maritz and the commando when they arrived at Soetwater, Calvinia on 14 June 1902. Their comrades were walking to and fro or standing in little groups whispering to each other; but the campfires had gone out and nobody had rekindled them. It struck him then how strangely quiet it

⁸ A 1, Vol 341/1, Smuts Papers, War diary of Gen Ben Bouwer (listed as a diary in Tottie Krige's handwriting), 2 June 1902.

⁹ Ferreira, *The Memoirs of General Ben Bouwer*, p284; De Kersauson de Pennendreff, *Ek en die Vierkleur*, p136.

¹⁰ De Villiers, *Met De Wet en Steyn in het Veld*, p240.

¹¹ KAB, AG 2075, Folio 10, To Secretary of Law Department, 12 June 1902.

¹² *South African Field Forces Casualty List*, Section 1902, p95, 3 June 1902.

¹³ Meintjes, *Stormberg a Lost Opportunity*, p189.

all was. They heard that Gen Smuts had already arrived. "Something depressing hung in the air as if a great disaster menaced us", said De Kersauson.¹⁴

The men were standing in front of the farmhouse when Gen Smuts walked out arm in arm with Maritz, climbed onto a wagon and said in a hoarse voice, "Children! The two republics called the Transvaal and the Orange Free State are no more. They died on 31 May at midnight". He did not mince matters. The Boer Republics had ceased to exist and they were now British subjects. Smuts then attempted to explain the appalling situation in the former Boer Republics. He finally reminded his men of their oath to fight to the bitter end. That end had come, he said, but not to their honour. They must surrender now because it was not God's time to give them their freedom.¹⁵ The news was received with anger and despair. The Transvalers stayed loyal, but certain Cape rebels were quite devastated. They had only been an afterthought, had not been mentioned in the final peace proposals, despite their sacrifices.

Neser remembered Smuts addressing them, and he said how difficult it was to explain what happened. At the negotiations they had done their best for the Cape rebel, but could do nothing for the rebel officers who would have to go into exile and wait for amnesty.¹⁶ Neser refused to read the agreement dealing with the rebels, and accused Smuts of betrayal. They parted on bad terms after Smuts snubbed him and said he had regarded him as a sensible man, but now he spoke like a child.¹⁷

After Smuts left, Maritz had the task of informing all the other commandos in the western Cape of the peace conditions; the commandos were assembled at Katkop where Maritz made the sad announcement and said farewell to them. He sent 680 men under a senior officer to lay down arms at Calvinia, and they barely reached it because their horses were in such a wretched condition. Maritz led 500 men to Kenhardt, which they reached on 24 June; Maj Clarke received the arms of the men with respect, but when it came to Maritz he said he would not surrender or submit and, once he had received a safe conduct to German territory, left to join De Kersauson who was waiting for him at Warmbad. As he reached the middle of the Orange River Maritz threw his rifle and his revolver into the water, aware he would not be allowed to enter German South West Africa armed.¹⁸

The officers who left the Cape Colony and crossed into German South West Africa were a mixed bunch of foreigners, accompanied by about 27 rebels. They included Abraham Louw, Andries Kampher, Willem Louw, C Schoeman, G Van Reenen, J Neser, P Marais, (ex-Cape Police), Christoffel Botha, Edwin Conroy, Hendrik Lategan, Floors Muller, Andries de Wet, SJ van Wyk and Jan Booysen. If they remained in the Colony they knew they would be tried as officers leading a rebellion, or on charges of

¹⁴ De Kersauson de Pennendreff, 'A French volunteer in the Ranks of the Boers', pp20-21.

¹⁵ De Kersauson de Pennendreff, *Ek en die Vierkleur*, p139-40; Shearing, *General Jan Smuts and his Long Ride*, p196.

¹⁶ Wessels, (ed), *Die Oorlogsherinneringe van Kommandant Jacob Petrus Neser*, p103.

¹⁷ Wessels, (ed), *Die Oorlogsherinneringe van Kommandant Jacob Petrus Neser*, p103.

¹⁸ De Kersauson de Pennendreff, 'A French volunteer in the Ranks of the Boers', p22.

murder. They were furious with the peace terms, sold everything and left for German South West Africa saying there were arms and ammunition hidden in the Transvaal and Orange Free State, and they hoped to have another rising later.¹⁹ Smuts warned Conroy especially that drastic action would be taken against him if he remained in the Cape Colony, as there were numerous charges of murder of coloured people pending against him. He recommended that as soon as Conroy had overseen the surrender of his commando, he either went overseas or moved to German South West Africa.²⁰

Unlike the burghers of the former Transvaal and Orange Free State, who had to surrender and hand in their arms, but were allowed to keep a horse and its tack; the rebel had to hand in his horse as well. It made military sense to demobilise the rebel and let him go home on foot. The strength of the commandos lay largely in their ability as a mounted force. By reducing them to pedestrians who had to walk home, they would not be tempted to form small gangs and terrorise some isolated farmer and take revenge while they were still angry. The truth was that had the rebels in the northwest refused to surrender or accept a negotiated settlement, the British would have been forced to pursue an all-out war with massed columns against them. The rebels separated from their Boer officers would not have stood much of a chance as their horses were in a 'wretched' condition. French warned the Attorney General at Cape Town from Victoria Road that many of the Boer horses would never even reach Porterville where the British had originally planned that the rebels would lay down arms.²¹

Honour Parade for Commandant Van Heerden

There was somebody who would not be laying down arms. Carel van Heerden had been killed in front of the Dutch Reformed Church in Aberdeen on 18 May, less than a fortnight before the end of the war. Neither Boer nor Brit could believe that the vibrantly alive Van Heerden would never do anything outrageous again. Abe Bailey's Column, who had pursued him fruitlessly, was devastated and rode out to Rooiberg, near Aberdeen, where his sister Elizabeth lived, to pay their respects. Her daughter told this researcher that her mother was furious that they had even dared come; but as the troopers walked around the *werf*, her husband forced her to go outside; he had hidden Cmdt Gideon Scheepers' rifle in the thatch of the outhouse and he didn't want the column looking around. Dressed in black and wearing a white apron, Van Heerden's sister, who closely resembled him, stood on the front step as the column formed fours and walked their horses past her, first removing their hats and then bowing to her in turn. She stood

¹⁹ KAB, PMO 85, 2498, Report from Col White at O'Okiep 9 July 1902; KAB, AG 2092, Surrender of Rebels who fled to German Territory.

²⁰ Roodt, *Die Kaapse Rebel*, p201.

²¹ CAR, AG 2075, Folio 5, French to Attorney General, Cape Town, 18 June 1902.

there until the column was out of sight. When she came into the house tears were pouring down her face. "The Khaki's made me cry", was all she said.²²

Laying down arms

When the first shock of Smuts' news had passed, senior officers such as Cmdt Boucher decided that the only sensible thing to do was to see that the men laid down arms before the bonds of discipline had time to become further relaxed. The following day he marched his men over to Atties at Van Rhynsdorp where they surrendered in accordance with the terms of the Treaty of Vereeniging.²³ Surrenders also took place at Clanwilliam, Kenhardt, Calvinia, Britstown, Hopetown, Cradock and Aliwal North and Kimberley. According to the first reports 2,511 rebels (724 from north of the Orange) and 403 Republicans laid down arms in the Cape Colony.²⁴ From the Smuts Commando 1,118 men (179 Republican officers and 182 burghers, five rebel officers and 752 rebel rank and file) surrendered.

At Britstown from Conroy's and Van Reenen's Commandos one Republican officer and six men laid down arms as well as two rebel officers and 185 rebels.²⁵ The 342 Cape rebels who belonging to Pypers', Smith's and Van Reenen's Commandos surrendered at Hope Town on 6 June to Col T McCracken of the Berkshire Regiment. Information on the surrenders at Hopetown relates to the quantity of arms, ammunition, horses and horse tack, and demonstrates the uneven distribution of resources, characteristic of the guerilla fighters who had to look to themselves for supplies. Although 333 firearms were surrendered here, twenty men were unarmed and twenty others were without ammunition. These rebels were not short of horses as 512 horses and mules were handed over, but 25 were dismounted, while others had up to four mounts on their string. As far as horse tack went 24 were riding bareback and 44 men had no bridles or halters to hand in.²⁶

In the eastern Cape Gen Malan had been wounded and was captured near Sheldon Station on 27 May, and was being nursed in the Cookhouse Hospital. A few days later a couple of army officers approached Fouché's Commando with a report under a white flag and asked him to accompany them to Cradock. His commando was sent on to Dwingfontein, which was awash with rumour that the war had ended. Fouché returned to his men on 5 June, apparently very upset, saying that when he reached Cradock he was confronted with a done deed; the leaders in the north had already signed the peace treaty on 31 May 1902. Fouché broke down before his men and threatened to shoot himself if his men thought he had

²² Shearing, *The Brave Boer Boy and Other Stories*, pp137-138.

²³ Ferreira, *Memoirs of General Boucher*, p285.

²⁴ FK 840, Hely-Hutchinson to Chamberlain, 1 July 1902. The Governor reported that that there were not more than 100 still in the field.

²⁵ Hancock and van der Poel (eds), *Selections from the Smuts Papers*, I, p515.

²⁶ KAB, AG 2062, Part 2, Miscellaneous Information.

betrayed them. There was no thought among them that Fouché, whose vigilance had brought them this far, would betray them; but they were amazed, however, at the peace conditions and that the Republics had ceased to exist. Du Plessis said they all knew that they were too few to fight on alone and the partial amnesty for the rebels also made the news easier to bear. The war would have been over long before had the rebels not been involved, thought Du Plessis. As they rode towards Cradock the rebels, who had to give up their horses, swapped their good horses for the weaker mounts some of the burghers were riding, and said their farewells knowing that they were unlikely to meet again.²⁷

Daan Scheepers of Upsal, who had been out scouting when Fouché broke the news to the commando, had a far more jaundiced view of the situation. Many Free Staters and some of the rebels were delighted when they heard the news, he said, while other rebels cursed themselves for the sacrifices they had made when they saw the attitude of the Free Staters. As far as many Republicans were concerned, the rebels could go to Hong Kong for all they cared, and many did not even say goodbye. He said bitterly that the rebels, the members of the Colonial Forces and the *Handsuppers* found themselves in the same boat after the war. When their respective sides needed help they called on them, only to find later that they were merely a stepping-stone to help the Boer and the British forces out of the mud.²⁸

At Cradock 33 Free Staters laid down arms as well as six rebel officers and 215 men. Among the rebels were two former Commandants - Daniel Wilhelmus Joachim Schoeman of Rivierpoort, Dordrecht, who had been commandant of the Dordrecht rebels from December 1899 to April 1900, when he lost his rank after the siege of Wepener. He then served in Myburgh's Commando until October 1901, and later joined Fouché's Commando. He received a three years' prison term in Grahamstown on 29 January 1903. The other ex-commandant was Christoffel Petrus Hendricus Myburgh of Lady Grey, who joined Fouché when his own commando disintegrated at the end of 1901.²⁹ He was sentenced to eighteen months and a fine of £500, or an additional twelve months on 17 January 1903.³⁰

Fouché and Piet Wessels left Cradock after the laying down of arms and went to supervise the surrender of the smaller commandos still in the field. The Free Staters under Odendaal and Bezuidenhout paraded their small commando, comprising 113 rebels and two Free State officers with 23 men, at Aliwal North. The men looked fit and well, but not overjoyed at surrendering and showed no signs of humility or defeat. Some of them were well equipped, and came in with spare horses, while others came in riding bareback. They were all well clothed, and carried wire cutters and spikes.³¹ As rumours were rife about rebels in hiding in the mountains waiting to surrender, 25 surrender forms were distributed to each

²⁷ Du Plessis, *Oomblikke van Spanning*, pp177-178.

²⁸ *Somerset Budget*, 'Commandant D du P Scheepers' Memoirs', 1962.

²⁹ KAB, AG 3421, Preparatory examination of DWJ Schoeman at Cradock, 23 June 1902.

³⁰ KAB, TOK 2/16, Register of Prisoners, November 1900 to March 1903.

³¹ Oosthuizen, *Rebelle van die Stormberge*, p217; *Northern Post*, 6 June 1902.

Magistrate. However only twelve Molteno rebels were reported from the local gaol, two surrendered in Oudtshoorn, one in Sutherland and in Wellington a suspected rebel applied for a form.³² Later a table was produced showing the ages of those who had surrendered on either side of the Orange River. The youngest was twelve and the oldest 70, while the bulk of the fighting men were between sixteen and 28 years. In keeping with the times 34 men did not know when they were born or how old they were.³³

Under the Peace Proclamation the last day given for surrender was 10 July 1902, but in practise as long as the Attorney General was satisfied, late surrenders were permitted.³⁴ Four Dordrecht rebels surrendered as late as 23 July 1902. Cmdt J Golding's Commando from Fraserburg and Sutherland had contracted measles, and 47 men surrendered during August 1902; their preliminary hearings were held in Beaufort West after they had all recovered.³⁵

Among Golding's commando was Johannes Jacobus Sieberhagen of Goedehoop who became the last surviving rebel veteran of Fraserburg, and was 92 when he was interviewed. After they had recovered from the measles, he said that they finally marched back from Beaufort West to Fraserburg on foot behind a wagon loaded with supplies and their bedding. They were not used to walking, and were exhausted when they reached the farm Grootfontein. The following morning they were so stiff that they had to crawl round on their hands and knees in the frost to get their legs moving again. It was a hard climb up the Oudekloof and the soldiers, feeling sorry for the older men, allowed them to ride in the wagon. They made their last camp at Ratelfontein where Golding had captured a convoy in April 1902. He always remembered the great sigh of thankfulness that went up from them all when they caught their first glimpse of Fraserburg again, and saw that most of the wire fences around the town had been pulled down. They had to stay in a camp near the gaol and appear before the Magistrate before going home, but at least they were back in the village again. The hardest thing about being a rebel, said Sieberhagen, was that they had not been allowed into their own village.³⁶

When Gen De Villiers received De la Rey's message that peace had been signed on 2 June at Highlands near Griquatown, he led a large party, including Cmdts Van Aswegen and Kruger, and rode towards Kimberley via Smidtsdrift. That night the three leaders and twelve men slipped away and surrendered at Jacobsdal on 21 June 1902, and did not return to the Cape Colony. The rest of the commando surrendered at Kimberley.³⁷

³² KAB, AG 2077, Reports from Magistrates re surrenders, 23 June 1902.

³³ KAB, AG 2106, Table 1b, showing the ages of rebels who surrendered under Proclamation 100 of 1902, and have been disenfranchised for life.

³⁴ KAB, AG 2092, Rebels surrendering outside the Cape Colony.

³⁵ KAB, AG 2076, Part 2, and AG 2077, Folio 88, late surrenders.

³⁶ Pers com, JJ Sieberhagen of Goedehoop who lived at Onse Rust, Fraserburg, 1976.

³⁷ KAB, AG 2092, Maj HS Solomon DAAG re surrender of rebel leaders.

Lukas Groenewald of Zoutfontein, Vryburg said they were all shocked to hear that peace had been signed, but when Gen Van Zyl asked if there were any who would go on fighting for the Republics, only 35 men stood up. They were ordered to surrender at Schweizer Reneke where they fired off all their ammunition and their shells, and surrendered their weapons to their own officers. Groenewald said something within him broke, thinking that he had fought for three years for a freedom that had never come. From the church steps an English officer called for three cheers for Gen De Wet, something that was given willingly enough. All the youngsters walked away though when the officer asked for a cheer for the 'English General' Many Stellelanders did not return to Vryburg district as they were, according to Groenewald, forbidden to cross the border for five years. Lukas Groenewald was one of many who were tried in the court in Kimberley in default in 1903 and were disqualified from voting until 1908.³⁸

The Cape Government decided they would not proceed against rebels unless they elected to return to the Colony, and if colonial rebels returned to their colonies, it would be at their own risk.³⁹ Numbers fluctuated and eventually 3,154 rebels who laid down arms in the final capitulation pleaded guilty to High Treason and were disenfranchised for life under Proclamation 100 of 1902. The last surrender under the act was that of Hendrik Gideon van Zyl of Namaqualand who was sentenced on 8 March 1904.⁴⁰ The vast majority of those who laid down arms from June 1902 were rebels of the second invasion. South of the Orange River 30 rebels' records have been traced that remained continuously on commando from the time they were commandeered in 1900 until they laid down arms in 1902. About 80 rebels living north of the Orange River have been traced that remained on commando throughout the war. However because between 600 and 700 rebels of the first invasion never laid down arms and have not been identified, this figure remains tentative.⁴¹

Eventually 712 rebels, mainly from north of the Orange River, did not surrender and lived in the Free State or the Transvaal, perhaps returning to the Cape Colony in 1905.⁴² However Cmdt Andries Jacobus van der Merwe of Meetfontein, Vryburg was convicted of High Treason on 6 February 1903 and sentenced to three years imprisonment; because the partial amnesty was granted in March 1903 he served six weeks of his sentence before he was released.⁴³

³⁸ KAB, AG 2117, Cases tried under the Indemnity and Special Tribunals Act of 1900; Bottomley, 'Anglo-Boer War reminiscences of LJ Groenewald', p17.

³⁹ KAB, AG 2092, Government House to Secretary to the Law Department, 19 June 1902.

⁴⁰ KAB, AG 2106, Folio 388, showing the number of rebels for each district who have surrendered under Proclamation 100 of 1902.

⁴¹ Shearing, *The Rebel Record*

⁴² CAR, AG 2106, Revised and corrected returns of 30 June 1903, however another list in the same file it states that enquiries are being made about 619 persons.

⁴³ CAR, AG 2051, No 126/1213, Return of persons convicted of High Treason in the High Court since 11 October 1899.

Conditions of Amnesty

All the rebels who surrendered signed a statement in the town where they had laid down arms giving their name and address, stating on oath that they were British citizens and that they had joined the Boer forces. They were required to give the date and place of joining, the name of their commandant and the date of surrender. They also signed a confession pleading guilty to the crime of High Treason, and then signed a declaration that they were not guilty of murder or any act contrary to the usage of war. They were required to swear an oath that when they joined the Boer forces they were not holding the position of Justice of the Peace or Field Cornet, or any other official position under the Cape Government, and neither did they hold the rank of commandant in the rebel forces. This declaration was signed before a Magistrate or officer appointed to accept surrenders. The rebel's signature had to be witnessed by two people.⁴⁴

The preliminary investigations were brief, to say the least. Two witnesses, usually the former rebel veld cornets, gave evidence in court that the accused had committed treason. After the defendant signed a confession the case was closed without the allegations having to be proved. The copies of this document, plus the record of the proceedings, were then sent to the Attorney General for review. Forty-two men were subsequently granted Free Pardons for their service in identifying members of their commandos to the courts.⁴⁵

It was not long before the men became impatient at the slow pace of legal proceedings. Seven erstwhile rebels, led by Henry Wickens of Brandvlei, wrote a letter of protest on 27 June 1902 from Clanwilliam, stating that they had handed in their arms, and they had all signed a declaration acknowledging that they were guilty of High Treason. They thought that they were going home as they needed to plough and their horses were dwindling away. They asked if they could go home and would return if the court required them.⁴⁶ They received support from a surprising quarter: French expressed his concern, saying that the country to the north had been cleared of fodder by the British and the Boers, and in order to avoid famine he suggested that that all males and black people be sent home to avoid a subsequent famine as it was the ploughing season in Calvinia.⁴⁷

However the rebels had to be patient; a note attached to the petition said the men were being attended to as speedily as possible, and all those whose surrenders were accepted were released by 23 July 1902.⁴⁸ By the end of July Smuts was complaining to Graham that large numbers of rebels were still detained. "These rebels have come in voluntarily to surrender, and they are being kept in gaol on the most

⁴⁴ NAR, FK 840, minute by Sprigg on 8 May 1902, suggesting a suitable form under Act 6 of 1900.

⁴⁵ CAR, AG 2094, Free pardons granted to certain rebels convicted of High Treason.

⁴⁶ CAR, AG 2075, Folio 5, Petition by seven surrendered rebels to Attorney General, 27 June 1902.

⁴⁷ CAR, AG 2075, Folio 5, French to Attorney General, 18 June 1902.

⁴⁸ KAB, 1/CWM 1/2/1/1, Criminal Record Book, Clanwilliam.

frivolous and contemptible charges.”⁴⁹ Smuts said that he felt a very heavy responsibility for the about 1,500 to 2,000 rebels who had joined his commando, and was honour bound to do his utmost for the ‘poor’ fellows.⁵⁰ Graham replied, saying that the terms of the amnesty minute were such as to include a trial of all surrendered rebels, and the form of trial had to take place before a legal and competent court. The men were treated as prisoners-of-war, and not as criminals. Staff had been employed to speed up the trials so that out of a total of 3,400 rebels 2,857 had been found guilty of High Treason and had been sentenced to ‘imprisonment to the rising of the Court’ by the end of July 1902. This meant that once the Attorney General had accepted the surrender the rebel returned to Court briefly and was handed a document stating that he had been tried for the crime of High Treason and had been convicted of the said crime. He was then free to return home.⁵¹

Lourens Jacobus Lodewykus Erasmus, alias Jacobus Marais, alias Louw Erasmus of Ladismith was sentenced to death for murder under the Indemnity and Special Tribunals Act of 1900 and his sentence was commuted to Penal Servitude for Life in the Eastern Districts Court on 17 March 1903.⁵² The Special Court found him guilty of the flogging and killing of black civilians during the war.⁵³

Between May and December 1902 nineteen rebels, including Jan Jacobus Cloete of Smitsdam, Jacobus George Koekemoer of Nieuwejaarskraal, Hay and Willem Gabriel Visser of Gorgais, Hay, were found guilty of the murder of unarmed blacks and sentenced to death, but these sentences were commuted to ten years for Cloete and Koekemoer and to life in the case of Visser. All three were transferred to the Breakwater Penal Station to serve their sentences. Other men faced lesser charges relating to theft, housebreaking, assault and robbery. Here sentences varied from nineteen months to three months and fines from £30, or in default three months, to £2, or in default three weeks.⁵⁴ In 30 cases rebels were charged with crimes other than High Treason. These charges related to murder, assault and malicious injury to property, but because of the difficulty in tracing credible witnesses, the Attorney General eventually dropped most cases and decided not to prosecute. These cases included the charges against Petrus Andries Pienaar of Hanover, accused by Midland Intelligence of train wrecking and murder; Abraham Coetzee suspected of the murder of SE Ramsden of Komadagga, and Albertus Bernadus van

⁴⁹ Hancock and Van der Poel (eds), *Selections from the Smuts Papers*, II, pp13-14.

⁵⁰ Hancock and Van der Poel (eds), *Selections from the Smuts Papers*, II, p 192, Smuts to Graham, 26 July 1902.

⁵¹ Hancock and Van der Poel (eds), *Selections from the Smuts Papers*, II, TL Graham to Smuts, 29 July, pp 189-190; Smith, *Ek Rebelleer*, a copy of the certificate handed to him by Magistrate L Harrison on 3 July 1902 at Cradock appears next to the foreword of *Ek Rebelleer*.

⁵² KAB, AG 2117, List of Persons found guilty in the Eastern Districts Court.

⁵³ Intelligence, Cape Colony district, *Boer Army List*, p11.

⁵⁴ CAR, AG 2051, Rebels charged with crimes other than High Treason.

Niekerk of Calvinia, accused of the murder of a Border Scout at Brakbosvlakte. They were found guilty of High Treason only, which was simpler to prove in court.⁵⁵

During October 1902 and March 1903 31 rebels out on bail since about June 1900 were tried in Kimberley under the Indemnity and Special Tribunals Act at a Special Treason Court. The stiffest sentence of five years was handed down to former Cmdt JA Jooste of Matsap; Christoffel Esterhuizen, former Republican veld cornet of Ward 2, got three and a half years; Jacobus van der Westhuizen also a veld cornet, got two years, as did Louis van Zyl, who was in charge of the commissariat. Others were given a fine with a prison term as an option, including Albertus Viljoen of Postmasburg who campaigned for the Republican cause prior to the war and was fined £750 or eighteen months.⁵⁶

The six Class 1 rebels who arrived back from Portugal on the *Bavarian* sentenced under the Indemnity and Special Tribunals Act of 1900, which was in force when they surrendered to the Portuguese, were Johannes Marthinus de Wet of Cloebert, Aliwal North, a former JP, who was sentenced to two and a half years imprisonment, Petrus Willem Kruger of Dordrecht, veld cornet under the Republicans got nine months, Jan Nel of Biesieslaagte, Aliwal North, former JP was sentenced to two and a half years, and Philip Christoffel Pretorius, Veld Cornet, was sentenced to nine months imprisonment. Jacobus Gustav van Aardt, the former Commandant of the Aliwal North rebels, was sentenced to five years imprisonment in Kimberley on 16 March 1903. Very few of these men served more than about four months, because partial amnesty was granted in March 1903.

The commissioners disenfranchised the Class 2 rebels in Kimberley during October 1902, and then moved around the country until November 1903 when the last court was held at Aliwal North. Only four defendants out of 84 were present when they were struck off the voter's roll for five years. It seemed an exercise in futility.⁵⁷ There were also 127 colonists living in the Republics when they joined the Boer forces at the outbreak of war that had not committed treason in the Cape Colony. The Colonial Government's suggestion that they be returned to the former Republics as ordinary prisoners-of-war was accepted.⁵⁸

About 23 Cape rebels surrendered to the British Consulate in Amsterdam. In September 1902 Cmdt Jan Vorster, arrived in Cape Town on the *City of Vienna* and was charged under the Indemnity and Special Tribunals Act of 1900.⁵⁹ Jotham Joubert, the former MLA for Albert, returned to the Cape suffering from nephritis, was allowed bail and died at home before facing charges of High Treason.⁶⁰

⁵⁵ CAR, AG 2051, Rebels charged with crimes other than High Treason; Gert Kotzé, *Die Anglo-Boereoorlog in Namaqualand*, pp88,166; Intelligence, *Boer Army List*, p19, lists Van Niekerk.

⁵⁶ KAB, AG 2117, List of persons convicted of High Treason under Act 6 of 1900.

⁵⁷ KAB, AG 2117, List of persons convicted of High Treason under Act 6 of 1900.

⁵⁸ KAB, AG 2092, Minute 1/359 from Prime Ministers Office to Governor, 18 August 1902.

⁵⁹ KAB, AG 2092, Rebels surrendering outside Cape Colony 1901-1905; KAB, AG 2077, Surrendered Rebels 1902.

⁶⁰ *Albert Times and Molteno News*, 4 September 1903.

Many rebels who had fled to German South West Africa were sick of it by 1903. Abraham and William Louw and Andries Kamfer surrendered at Schuit Drift in the Kenhardt district on 27 March 1903. They told Inspector B Brown, who was sent to arrest them, that former commandants such as Van Reenen and Schoeman, as well as well as ex-Field Cornet Willem van Wyk of Clanwilliam, were scattered, and that the Germans would like them to settle in the country and offered an advance of £50 to either hire or buy a farm.⁶¹ Cornell, a prospector in the Richterveld, met one of the many 'irreconcilables' who had trekked to German South West. He was trekking back with his numerous family to the Cape Colony, with his wagons pulled by 24 oxen, exasperated by German 'justice' and was thankful to be allowed to live under the despised Union Jack once more.⁶²

The Tokai Gaol filled to capacity when the men returned from St Helena and Bermuda. The register contained 544 names, of which 75 had served their sentences and had been released. After the war ended, the gaols for political prisoners closed down, and the last few cases, including Daniel Schoeman and Christoffel Myburgh, convicted under the Special Tribunals Act at Grahamstown, were transferred to Tokai where they served sentences from a few days to a few weeks because they were sentenced between 29 January and 18 March 1903, and were amnestied from 21 March 1903.⁶³

About 47 prisoners released from Kimberley Gaol included Nicholas Joubert of Colesberg, and Daan and Petrus Snyders of Barkly West.⁶⁴ The partial amnesty of 516 Class 1 rebels and prisoners-of-war from St Helena and Bermuda took place during the visit of Joseph Chamberlain to South Africa. Smuts had also made a plea to Chamberlain for their amnesty, saying it would tend to heal the deep wounds inflicted by the war.⁶⁵ Colvin stated only that 380 rebels were set at liberty after 21 March 1903.⁶⁶

Even in 1903 rebel veld cornets were still appearing before the courts. In the Circuit Court in Beaufort West during March 1903 Willem F Sieberhagen and Hermanus A de Vries, both Veld Cornets under Cmdt J Golding, were sentenced to six months imprisonment a few days before the partial amnesty of March was announced.

The following were convicted of High Treason in the Supreme Court in 1903: Jacobus Grobbelaar of Hanikampskuil, Clanwilliam, former Veld Cornet in Cmdt Johannes Smith's Commando, was fined £150 or twelve months imprisonment on 4 February 1903; David Gideon Poggenpoel of Boovenkraal,

⁶¹ CAR, AG 2092, Letter from Sub-Inspector Brown re surrenders of A and W Louw and A Kamfer, 11 April 1903.

⁶² Fred C Cornell, *The Glamour of Prospecting: Wanderings of a South African Prospector in Search of Copper, Gold, Emeralds, and Diamonds*, p81.

⁶³ KAB, TOK 2/16, Tokai Prison Register, November 1900 to March 1903.

⁶⁴ Ackerman, *Opsaal*, p344; War Museum of the Boer Republics, Bloemfontein, 4305/62, letter by JF Joubert of Colesberg, 16 March 1903.

⁶⁵ Hancock and Van der Poel (eds), *Selections from the Smuts Papers*, II, p64, Address to J Chamberlain.

⁶⁶ Colvin, *The Life of Jameson*, p217.

Calvinia was handed down the same sentence on 16 January 1903; while a storekeeper, Louis van Colter of Hope Town was fined £30 or three months imprisonment in April 1903.⁶⁷

The final rebel return tabled

Below is the return from AG 2106 Folio 388 showing "the return of the total number of British subjects resident in the Cape Colony known to have taken part in the Rebellion during the war with the Transvaal and Orange Free State, and the manner in which they have been dealt with."

How dealt with	No	Convicted	Cases awaiting trial, there being prima facie evidence of commission of crime	Undergoing and awaiting investigation by Magistrates	Awaiting Decision of Attorney General	Dead	Absconded
Indemnity and (Class I Special Tribunals)	522	361	92		64	5	
Act 6 of 1900 (Class II)	6704	3134	2330		445	83	712
Surrendered under Proclamation issued on the general capitulation No 100 dated 11th June 1902	3507	3442			65		
Convicted by Military Courts	800	800					
Prisoners-of-War	439			439			
Surrendered and interned in Portuguese territory	147			147			
Grand total	12119	7737	2422	586	574	88	712

During the Parliamentary session of July 1903 Merriman moved that a general amnesty for those involved in the late rebellion would be in the best interest of South Africa. He reviewed the first rebellion when Republican forces crossed into the Cape Colony at Colesberg and Aliwal North. He pointed out that at Colesberg only a small part of the population took part, but at Aliwal North, Barkly East and Dordrecht they were joined by a large part of the population. He admitted they had no justification for doing so, but

⁶⁷ CAR, AG 2051, Rebels convicted of High Treason in the Supreme Court, since 11 October 1899, Poggenpoel was probably a Veld Cornet under Maritz.

thought they were carried away by a kind of 'madness'. There were others who were forced to take up arms and many of them had a very bad time. The majority of the rebels in Griqualand West originally came from the Transvaal and the Free State, and due to the rinderpest had suffered grievously; it was what happened to their land, Merriman said, that made them desperate to grab at anything. While he acknowledged that the people did wrong, he appealed for a general amnesty, describing it as the best policy to unite the two races in the interest of England and South Africa.⁶⁸ But in his plea for amnesty for the rebels, Merriman did not even hint that he was a member of the Schreiner Cabinet that played a large part in triggering the first uprising.

Merriman failed to get support from the Sprigg Cabinet for the granting of a total amnesty only a few months after the general release of prisoners. However Dr Jameson, leader of the opposition replying to the motion, said that only sixteen persons were in gaol at the present time serving sentences for High Treason, theft or murder. There was also the issue of 600 rebels living outside the Colony. In addition Sprigg pointed out that Conroy had severely flogged two Dutch Field Cornets and he could not support a motion that allowed him to return to the Colony and not face charges in court.⁶⁹

Both Merriman and Sauer lost their seats in the following election although they were offered others. Sprigg resigned and Dr Jameson was asked to form a new ministry. Jameson introduced a partial Amnesty Bill, which replaced the Special Tribunals with District Courts to try the remaining rebels, sentencing them to a maximum of five years disenfranchisement. He then introduced the 'Better Administration of Justice' Bill that abolished the Special Treason Courts, and modified in many other ways the treatment of rebels who were no longer to be tried even for homicide, if they had acted under the orders of their superior officers. This went a long way to easing the bitterness and suspicion that was rife in parliament, and opened the road to reconciliation.⁷⁰ At the same time the political prisoners were freed from the Breakwater Prison.⁷¹ FS Malan, editor of *Ons Land*, said had the session not been so far advanced the opposition would have tried to force a motion for General Amnesty. Jameson said that he was anxious to wipe the slate clean after consultation with the loyal Dutch and those disenfranchised, and concluded that both groups opposed amnesty on the grounds that those in exile should return and suffer their penalties and then the matter could be considered.⁷²

Among those who returned to the Cape Colony in 1905 were Hendrik Lategan of Colesberg, Petrus Jacobus de Villiers of Herbert and Schalk Willem van Wyk who were served summonses to appear

⁶⁸ Cape of Good Hope, *Debates of the House of Assembly*, 1903, pp383-386

⁶⁹ Cape of Good Hope, *Debates of the House of Assembly*, 1903, pp387-389.

⁷⁰ Ian Colvin, *Life of Jameson*, pp245-246.

⁷¹ KAB, AG 2080, Folio 24, List of convicts at Breakwater Convict Station, prepared at the request of P Faure, 19 May 1903; KAB, AG 2117, sentences handed down in the High Court in Kimberley; KAB, AG 2051, Rebels charged with High Treason in Supreme Courts, High Courts and Circuit Courts.

⁷² *Cape Argus*, May 28 1904.

in their local courts where they were disenfranchised for five years under Section 6 of Act no 35 of 1904 between March and May 1905.⁷³

General Amnesty

Once the government had dropped charges against those rebels who had not surrendered, all disfranchised rebels had their voting rights returned in 1906.⁷⁴ Among those who had returned from the Netherlands to the Free State after the general amnesty in 1904 was the born survivor, Nesar, who later farmed in Victoria West for two years. Enigmatically he said his experiences as a rebel were 'interesting' and said he always regretted that the war did not last another six months.⁷⁵

The tendency of the Colonial Government was to bury the rebellion as an aberration best forgotten, especially with the prospect of Union ahead. Mr D du Toit had said at Paarl during the Conference of the Loyalists, that the guerilla warfare in the Cape Colony, after the annexation by the Republics, had a most demoralising effect on the Afrikaner people generally as hundreds of unarmed black and brown people were shot in cold blood. This belated guiltiness called for vengeance, and unless the Afrikaners acknowledged guilt, he feared a dark future was before this country. Du Toit said that already there was a murmur from the black people, "Only wait; our time will come".⁷⁶

Memorials

After the partial amnesty was granted in 1903, the former members of Lötter's Commando, buried in the shadow of the kraal wall where they fell, were removed and the remains re-interred on the farm Nooitgedacht at the nearby hamlet of Petersburg.⁷⁷ In 1907 the Cradock Memorial to the Boer fallen was erected in the graveyard, but was moved in 1974 to the grounds of the Dutch Reformed Church after heavy floods along the Fish River.

In 1908 the remains of seven men executed around Graaff-Reinet were reinterred in a single grave in the old DRC cemetery between Cradock and Stockenstrom Streets. The remains of Cmdt Gideon Scheepers were not recovered, leading to a search for his grave that would continue for many years. In December 1908 the Anglo-Boer War memorial, dedicated to Scheepers and the seven rebels who were executed on the outskirts of the town, was unveiled on the corner of Donkin and Somerset Streets in

⁷³ CAR, AG 2092, General file on late surrenders.

⁷⁴ Lewsen, *JX Merriman: Paradoxical South African Statesman*, p 283.

⁷⁵ Wessels (ed), *Die Oorlogsherinneringe van Kommandant Jacob Petrus Nesar*, pp13, 127.

⁷⁶ *Congress of Loyalists*, p39.

⁷⁷ Shearing, *Commandant Johannes Lötter and his Rebels*, p33 for photograph of the Nooitgedacht memorial, and p41 for the Chair Memorial at Middelburg.

Graaff-Reinet on a small plot donated by a sympathiser, Mr Jurie Laubscher. The Town Council had rejected a request to place the memorial on the square behind the present Town Hall.⁷⁸

In 1928 a Burgher Memorial was erected in Middelburg, Cape for the rebels who died or were executed in that district. The Chair Monument was erected on the outskirts of town on the spot where Cmdt Lötter and V/C Wolfaardt were executed, while the grave they share is in the old cemetery.⁷⁹ Most of the other memorials are to be found in graveyards or in the grounds of the Dutch Reformed Churches such as at Dordrecht, Van Rhynsdorp and Calvinia. In Namibia the descendants of Boer veterans who emigrated from the Cape Colony after the South African War have erected plaques in a memorial wall of the Dutch Reformed Church in Windhoek.

There are numerous memorials to the British and Colonial forces; there are few in memory of the many black and coloured men caught up in the war: the church in memory of Abraham Esau in Calvinia, the plaque in the Methodist Church at Leliefontein where one of the worst killings occurred under Maritz, and at Clanwilliam in the church of St John, the Redeemer. The horses that died by the thousands in the South African War are remembered at the Horse Memorial in Port Elizabeth.

The widespread deaths of so many coloured scouts at the hands of the Boer forces were remembered by the itinerant shearing teams in a mime. They used to travel around the Sutherland district right up to the late 1960's, by which time the actors and the sons of the original actors were too old to go out shearing. During the weekends the farm staff would gather for a reenactment of the death of a coloured scout belonging to the 'Levental Vors' (Colonial Defence Force). The shearers and the 'outsorts' workers all had their parts. Some of them would play the Boers, others the hapless scout. The first part consisted of the flight of the scout, his capture, and the confrontation with the 'Commandant'. The digging of the grave and the arrival of the firing squad followed. The high point of the mime was the shooting of the scout, which ended with his final dramatic collapse into the 'grave'. It was all part of shearing in the Sutherland district for many years, and for many scouts, who died in unknown graves, their only memorial.⁸⁰

The long aftermath

As the 20th Century progressed the hot war was followed by a cold war in which anger, resentment and bitterness between the Afrikaans- and English-language groups was widespread. Rebellion

⁷⁸ Shearing, *Commandant Gideon Scheepers and the Search for his Grave*, p183.

⁷⁹ Shearing, *Commandant Johannes Lötter and his Rebels*, p66.

⁸⁰ Pers com, C de Jager, Fransplaas Sutherland, 1980; Pers com, Dr R van der Merwe, Klipkraal, Fraserburg, 1980.

was of course a dead loss, as no rebel who remained under arms until June 1902 was allowed to send in claims for compensation.⁸¹

Many Cape rebels returned home months after peace was signed because of the legal processes they had to go through. One of the first back was Schalk Willem du Plessis of Hotwegkloof, Cradock, who joined Fouché in March 1901 and laid down arms at Hopetown. According to a cousin he returned penitent and very happy to have made it home safely. Once Martial Law was lifted and people could travel freely again sales of stock bought up during the war were held. Thirteen thousand sheep and cattle were offered at Colesberg at the first stock sale. The auctioneer, C de Jager, said he was amazed when buyers from the Transvaal appeared and counted out 'Oom Paul' gold pounds that they had hoarded from their money belts onto his counter. He slept in his office that night with a shotgun in his hand.⁸²

Willem Steyn arrived alone in Cradock on 25 March 1903 as both his father, Charl, and his brother, Hendrik, had died on Bermuda. He had to face a new reality. His mother had remarried, a neighbour; the farm was out of their hands and he had to support five siblings. He struggled to find work until Cradock builders, O'Brien and Campbell took him on as an apprentice; he eventually joined the railway. When Cmdt Wolhuter, who was collecting for the Transvaal and the Free State, asked Steyn for a donation his fury knew no bounds. He told them angrily that he would have been hanged in place of Johannes Coetzee if their minister had not proved that he was only sixteen; how they had been treated as convicts on Bermuda; how the rebels had been left behind long after the other prisoners-of-war had returned to the Cape Colony. The last straw for Steyn was that they would not pay compensation for their sufferings but the Transvalers and Free Staters for whom they had fought would be paid out. Wolhuter, very concerned, contacted Gen Louis Botha whose long and kindly letter pleading for reconciliation did much to console Steyn. Even so he wore his POW British army warm coat until it wore out. When it was in tatters his wife cut it up into a blanket to cover the newly baked bread; it had to be folded so that the line and tent number always showed to the front. Obviously the scars of war were too deep for Steyn ever to leave Bermuda completely behind.⁸³

Numerous rebels only married in their late forties and early fifties, and their sons and daughters remembered their fathers taking the place of a grandfather in the household. Among them was Thomas Philipus du Plessis of Middel Plaats, Aberdeen who fought under Scheepers and Fouché. He wandered around, according to his family, and only settled down after he married Gertrude Wiggle at Cathcart when he was 45. He treasured the poetry book he had carried since the war. A poem he wrote himself was 'The

⁸¹ KAB, TOK 2/1, Notice to prisoners at Tokai Prison convicted of High Treason, signed H Tucker for Under Secretary, 12 August 1903.

⁸² SWJ van Rensburg, *From the Horse's Mouth. The Story of South Africa's Veteran Vet*, Pretoria, 1983, p19; De Jager, Clarence, 'Memoirs', private archives of Julian de Jager, Beaufort West.

⁸³ Steyn, 'Kaapse Rebel te Bermuda', Private Archives of C Steyn, Glentana, p66.

Outcast's Song'. It is not certain whether he wrote the 'Death of Young Cronjé' and a poem about Lieut Izak Liebenberg who was captured at Onbedacht. He was remembered in his finest hour, fighting off the forces under Gen French, and trying to protect his 40 men from an overwhelming force.⁸⁴

The failure to pay the rebels compensation became a long-standing grievance with many Colonial rebels. In reality the Commission of the War Losses Compensation Commission paid out £175,000 to rebels who were found guilty of High Treason for losses they sustained after they surrendered or after they were captured. They were paid out after the claims of the loyalists were settled in 1907. That is not to say that the rebels, who only laid down arms from June 1902, did not send in numerous claims trying to get compensation for the horses, saddles and bridles and the weapons they had surrendered when they laid down arms. All these claims were disallowed.⁸⁵

Losses sustained by colonists whose donkey wagons had been commandeered by the Imperial Forces were also not paid out. For instance up to 60 donkey wagons were commandeered from local farmers in the Beaufort West district in 1902 to convey goods from the railhead to Fraserburg and Williston. After Gen W Malan captured the convoy under the control of Col E Crabbe many of the wagons were burnt. As late as 1920 when Eric Louw canvassed for the National Party, farmers including Gert Hattingh of Bakovenfontein, Beaufort West joined the party because they had not received compensation for these losses sustained in the South African War.⁸⁶

There were however more reports of anger against the Free Staters after the General Amnesty of 1906 than bitterness against the British or colonial forces. However touching reunions between former rebels and erstwhile Boers also took place after the Amnesty. There are group photographs taken in Aberdeen in 1906 showing Comdt Schalk Pypers sitting in the place of honour with his former rebels clustered around him.

Pieter Kritzinger returned from the Orange Free State, married Paul Michaus's daughter from Cradock and later became the MPC for Cradock in 1929. Over 30 years later Izak Buys from Somerset East and Stephen Guest, who once lived near George were among those who went with Mrs Sophia Scheepers to Bloemfontein to investigate a man in a Psychiatric Institution who claimed to be her son,

⁸⁴ Tom du Plessis, poetry book, private archives of Ivor du Plessis, Mossel Bay, 1999.

"Daar op een rots achte rand
 "Daar staan ons dapper luitenant
 "Daar tegen een groote overmacht
 "Deldt hy den vyand een zwaar slag
 "Daar heft hy die wereld getoon
 "Met welk helden moed een vrystaat zoon,
 "Met iets meer as en 40 man
 "Tegen een groote overmacht kan staan."

⁸⁵ Cape of Good Hope, Official publications, *Second Interim Report of the War Losses Compensation Inquiry Commission*, 13 March 1906, p21.

⁸⁶ Shearing, *The Brave Boer Boy and Other Stories*, p119.

Cmdt Gideon Scheepers.⁸⁷ For many rebels and burghers bonds forged in a time of danger outlasted their anger at their exclusion in the Peace Treaty.

Like war veterans the world over the survivors held reunions and went on symbolic commandos. In 1938 Wynand Malan returned from Kenya, and with Manie Maritz, Ben Burger, Koos Pienaar of Murraysburg and Jac Retief, whose shoulder wound had never completely healed, and others visited the places where they had skirmished. They rode through the Midlands, visited Gabrielsbaaken in Murraysburg, and Hendrik Hugo's memorial at Victoria West, and slipped back into the old order of doing things. And each evening Malan ceremoniously blew his old whistle as he had long ago.⁸⁸

Malan led the way for others to reconcile with their former enemies with his friendship with Whitcomb Rose of the Beaufort West District Mounted Troops, whom he had wounded in the chest in the Murraysburg district during October 1901. Rose would receive a box of hanepoort grapes each summer from the Boland organised by Malan, and they exchanged Christmas cards every year for 40 years until they died; united and not divided by their experiences in the South African War.⁸⁹

⁸⁷ Shearing, *Commandant Gideon Scheepers and the Search for his Grave*, p186.

⁸⁸ Pers com, Mrs Barbara Theron of Landsig, Murraysburg, 1970.

⁸⁹ Shearing, *The Brave Boer Boy and other stories*, p112.

CHAPTER 9

CONCLUSION

In conclusion this thesis considers the initial rebellion of the Griqualand West and the Bechuanaland Cape colonists a consequence of their dire poverty as the prime reason why some of them joined the Free Staters and the Transvalers in a war against Great Britain in 1899. The government of the Cape Colony deliberately left their frontier with the Free State undefended, and must carry the responsibility for the invasion south of the Orange River.

The Cape rebel north of the Orange River was the poor man, the poverty-stricken Afrikaner, who was struggling to survive the harrowing after-effects of the rinderpest pandemic of 1896. All the way down the chain of society from the landowner and cattle breeder, the transport rider, down to the woodchopper and the youngster who led the ox team, they all had depended on the ox for their living.

When the cattle died from rinderpest, and the game, the alternative resource, died too, the region collapsed economically and these colonists became desperate. In contrast to those who lived in Mafeking and Kimberley and earned salaries or wages in the diamond industry or the railways, in commerce or the Police, the colonists north of the Orange River, dependent on agriculture, were living from hand to mouth. The invasion of the Vryburg area by the Transvaal forces came at an opportune moment for him to get back on his feet and feed his family. Consequently that the colonists offered to fight for the Boer forces if their mortgages were remitted, points more to their economic state than Afrikaner nationalism.

The methodology of this thesis is based not only on primary and secondary sources, but also on a database called 'The Rebel Record' on which every person on any rebel list (official or otherwise) is recorded. A total of 4,432 rebels have been traced for Griqualand West, the highest number of rebels for any region in the Cape Colony during the South African War. When the official returns of colonial rebels were released in 1903 for Griqualand West and were compared with the database, there were 1,000 more on the 'Rebel Record'. However if the statistics are disregarded for Kimberley and Mafeking, a total of 2,928, or 33.8% of white males of Griqualand West, rebelled according to official returns, or if the sympathizers are included, the numbers jump to 3,853 or 44.5% according to the 'Rebel Record'.¹

The recruiting of rebels by Republican forces had been made easy, as the colonial frontiers had been left unguarded. Except for Kimberley and Mafeking, which had taken the initiative in

¹ See Addendum 2 in which the Statistical record for 1904, AG 2106 and the 'Rebel Record' are compared.

mounting their own defence, the passive Cape Colonial Ministry, led by William Schreiner, failed to deploy the Volunteer forces, the Cape Mounted Rifles, and ordered the Cape Police to withdraw at the first sign of invading Republican forces. Schreiner did not even lodge a protest with the Transvaal Government when they invaded the colony north of the Orange River. The Colonial Government therefore created a power vacuum on the borders of the Colony, which led to the expulsion of thousands of loyalists from the region. This created an impression that victory for the Republican forces was ensured.

There is evidence that there was a widespread belief among rebels that the commandeering notes issued by the Republican government were legal documents, and this resulted in sympathetic treatment by the colonial government after the first surrender. Two rebel commandos were formed; the Stellingland and the Griqualand Commandos, and they were issued rifles with serial numbers from the Transvaal and Free State armories, and fought with the various Republican commandos. However from first to last it was the Boer senior officers and not the rebels who decided on the overall strategies to defeat the British. Generally rebels were used to recruit other colonists to the Boer forces, though they were also employed to commandeer food supplies for the laagers, and in that way they also further impoverished their own environment.

An unknown number of colonists took part in major battles along the Modder River and suffered casualties. Accounts of the Griqualand Commando indicate that the Transvalers, Free Staters and rebels did not integrate well as a group. When Paardeberg fell and rebels were captured, some gave false addresses, as they feared reprisals from the British for rising in rebellion.

After Mafeking was relieved in May 1900, there was a hiatus in the rebellion north of the Orange River until December 1900 when hundreds of Griqualand West rebels surrendered. Small groups of rebels under the redoubtable Gen Piet de Villiers of Herbert continued to operate against the British in the Republics, working in conjunction with Gen De la Rey. De Villiers returned to Griqualand West with rebels who had not previously surrendered. These rebels, who received little support from the Republican forces, were approximately 15% of those who rose in the first invasion and fought a war of attrition against British and colonial forces. Over 700 rebels did not lay down their arms in 1902, but moved to the former Republics from where some returned, but others drifted to the cities to eke out a living.

South of the Orange River in the Stormberg region and further west at Colesberg, less affected by rinderpest, just over 4,000 families became disaffected due to the failure of the Schreiner Ministry to respond to their pleas for help, as they feared they would be invaded. As events unfolded a groundswell of opinion occurred among those in favour of joining the Free State forces; they were inspired by a hope of a future in their region for Afrikaners under President Steyn. The delay by the Orange Free State leaders, who did not advance rapidly into the Cape Colony when there were no forces to oppose them, resulted in the annexation of the Stormberg and the Colesberg regions

occurring almost simultaneously with the landing in East London of the first reinforcements of British units from overseas.

Statistics from the 'Rebel Record' for the northeastern Cape (Albert, Aliwal North, Barkly East, Herschel, Molteno and Wodehouse indicate that, including sympathizers, rebels stood at 3,614 or 26.3% of the white male population compared to the final estimates of 1903, that gave 3,535 rebels or 25.8% of the white male population. In Colesberg the number of rebels and sympathizers totaled 514 or 21.4% according to the 'Rebel Record'. In the final rebel tally of 1903 the return of rebels for Colesberg was 399 or 16.6%.

The Free State claims that colonists invited them to annex the region are in dispute, and from the outset many colonists were disillusioned by the Free State methods of commandeering under coercion, and desertion was rife. Apart from the loyalists who were forced to leave the region, there were numerous Afrikaners that doubted whether the Boer forces could ultimately be victorious.

Despite an outstanding victory over British forces at Stormberg in December 1899, the rebels became demoralized once the colonial forces were completely reorganized and numerous irregular corps raised. The Free State leader, Cmdt Olivier, failed to integrate the Free State and the rebel forces, and failed to give leadership to the rebels of the Dordrecht district who were under pressure from the Colonial Division on the western Stormberg. Although fewer colonists joined the Republican forces at Colesberg, they were militarily more successful, especially under the redoubtable Gen De la Rey. However this front collapsed after the surrender of Gen Cronjé at Paardeberg in February 1900 and the withdrawal of the Free State forces.

In the Stormberg region rebels, disillusioned with Free State leadership, began to lay down arms. Those who had fought off the colonial forces near Dordrecht in early March 1900 were bitter when they discovered that Cmdt Olivier had fallen back to the Orange Free State via Burgersdorp, and did not reinforce them. About 3,500 men surrendered in March 1900 and in the months that followed, surrendering their rifles. Less than 500 Colesberg and Stormberg rebels followed the retreating Free State and Transvaal forces over the Orange River in March 1900. Only Cmdt Hendrik Lategan of Colesberg kept a grip on his men, and became the *de facto* rebel leader. By December 1900 fewer than 300 rebels were left in the commandos to fight the British and colonial forces in the Boer Republics. Elsewhere parties of rebels wandered around in extended family groups on the fringes of the fighting, while others were captured at Bothaville in November 1900.

The expedition to Gordonia and Kenhardt to proclaim the northwest Cape part of the Orange Free State got under way in February 1900. This expedition was aborted in early March, but it expanded the area over which the war was being waged. Gen Piet de Villiers scored at Fabersputs, Douglas over British and colonial forces, indicating that when rebels were well led they could be redoubtable fighters. Small guerilla groups could not afford heavy losses, and as a result of the losses suffered at Fabersputs 300 men surrendered, handing in their arms. The consequence was that when

the war flared up again in December 1900, the rebel recruits faced a chronic shortage of arms and ammunition.

The collapse of the first invasion in March 1900 caught Milner and the Colonial Government unprepared to deal with the approximately 5,000 Cape rebels waiting to surrender. It was the colonial Parliament's duty, on the advice of the Secretary of State, to promulgate legislation to deal with the rebellion. The punishment of Class 1 rebels was acceptable to the Parliamentary leaders, but the Schreiner Ministry split over the amnesty issue and the punishment for rebel rank and file. Schreiner lost the support of the Afrikaner Bond and resigned in June 1900. The new ministry, under Sir Gordon Sprigg, passed the Indemnity and Special Tribunals Act 6 of 1900 in October 1900. It was to run for six months. This act was one of conciliation by the Cape Colonial Parliament as Class 1 rebels were handed down fines and terms of imprisonment, while the Class 2 rebels were disfranchised for only five years. But the consequence was that youngsters and non-voters got off scot-free if they were captured under arms and found guilty of High Treason before April 1901.

During 1900 Martial Law was not in vogue in large areas of the Cape Colony. In these areas meetings were addressed by prominent colonials, including Dr Tom te Water, Minister Without Portfolio, who criticized the manner in which the war was being waged and the role of the military in moving the Boer women into camps. Rebels said later that statements made by delegates to a congress in Worcester played a decisive part in their decision to join the Free State forces in early 1901.

Partly due to the complacency of the military that thought the war was nearly over, the second invasion of the Cape by Orange Free State forces in December 1900 caught the British and the Cape Colonial Government unprepared. President Kruger was out of the country; President Steyn knew that he had to keep the war going, or lose the Free State's independence at a peace conference. Consequently he sent mobile commandos into the Cape Colony to tell the world that the Republicans were far from defeated, enroll recruits and seek supplies. The result of Gen J Hertzog's raid into the northwest Cape was that he recruited just over twenty colonists, but commandeered over 600 horses, leaving a shortage that impacted unfavourably on Cmdt Manie Maritz and Gen Smuts' later efforts to raise commandos. This investment also became notorious for its ill treatment of the coloured population, who reacted by becoming scouts or joining the Colonial Defence Force.

Initially Cmdt Pieter Kritzinger aimed at keeping insurgency at a low level, but inevitably it grew, and in time precipitated an all-out response from the army. Nevertheless the Midlands and southern Cape were in turmoil for five months, and the commandos, mainly tenant farmers and younger sons, rode at will. Essentially it was the defensive network created under Martial Law, and the removal of horses, fodder, arms and ammunition from the reach of the commandos that weakened them as mobile units.

From June 1901 combined colonial and imperial forces under Gen J French began defeating the commandos by using mass tactics. The strict application of Martial Law over the civilian population, as well as the shortage of horses, arms and ammunition, played as large a part as the

opposition of columns and the Colonial Defence Force. Nature too turned against the commandos; an outbreak of horse sickness was followed by the coldest winter in many years, and these took their toll on men and animals. Population support for the rebels failed, not only due to stringent Martial Law regulations, but because rebels, especially those under Piet van der Merwe, became freebooters and preyed on the population of the southern Cape, making little effort to gain support of hearts and minds.

During the South African War the rebel found to his cost that the British army did not only fight down the barrel of a gun, but with the Manual of Military Law, and had strict laws about firing after surrender and what they described as 'misuse of the white flag'.² The Mafeking rebels that became embroiled in the shooting of blacks while on commando were under orders from Gen Snyman to do so. They fell foul of the law basically because they were ignorant that not every homicide was justified during wartime, and that the shooting of an unarmed prisoner was a crime.

From April 1901 the military took over the courts, and shock tactics, such as death sentences and penal servitude for life, were handed down to young rebels. The rebel soon discovered to his cost that he was far more severely dealt with by the courts because he was a British citizen and a rebel, than the Free Stater who was regarded by the military as a legitimate belligerent. This was bitterly resented by many of the rebels, who saw themselves as heroes who had gone to the aid of the Free Stater for the sake of Afrikanerdom.

From June 1901 the military strategy in the Cape Colony was to drive all commandos west to isolate them from those commandos in the main theatres of war. By 1902 the Boer forces were concentrated north of a blockhouse line that ran east from Lamberts Bay. Rebel recruitment virtually ceased in the Midlands as possible recruits weighed the risks and turned away. The commandos in Calvinia and Fraserburg, and others west of the Cape Town/Bloemfontein line, increased in number; they carried out operations far from the Free State borders, but blockhouses erected along the railway lines impeded their movements. They were isolated from the mainstream of war to the extent that the Peace Treaty was signed at Vereeniging, and the news could be kept from the Boer forces by the military until Gen Smuts' return two weeks afterwards.

About 805 Cape rebels were captured under arms from the Battle of Modder River in 1899 to April 1901, when the military took over the courts. They were sent to POW camps in St Helena, India and Ceylon with prisoners-of-war from the Boer Republics, and were dealt with humanely under the provisions of the Hague Convention. Those that surrendered to the Portuguese in Delagoa Bay were later interned in Portugal. On their return to the Cape Colony these rebels faced charges of High Treason in court under the Indemnity and Special Tribunals Act.

After the military took over the Martial Law courts in 1901, rebels sentenced to penal servitude for life were treated harshly in St George's Military prison on Bermuda. Medical personnel on Bermuda intervened to ensure that they were released to join others serving terms of penal

² D/D 6/114, Folio 69, *Army Orders, South Africa*, 13 December 1900

servitude in open camps on Bermuda. The sentences of 794 rebels sentenced under Martial Law were reviewed and commuted by a Royal Commission in November 1902, paving the way for their return to the Cape Colony in 1903.

A document prepared for G Sprigg by his Secretary gives statistics of those punished by death, imprisonment and fines. It states that 32 Cape colonists were executed by Military Courts and two others under the Indemnity and Special Tribunals Act of 1900. Colonists imprisoned by Military Courts, Special Courts, Superior and Eastern District Courts, as well as High Courts totaled 1,012. The total amount of fines imposed by both the Military and Civil Courts totaled £47,550. A second list – probably for the post-war period – states that 73 rebels were imprisoned and fines of £2,497 were imposed.³

The second invasion was destructive in every sense. It did not bring victory to the Boers, but kept a dying war alive and lengthened the suffering of the women and the children in the camps. If the general strategy of the Cape Colonial Forces is examined, it appears that when the political will was there the Colony could bring the rebellion under control. From the Free State point of view the invasion was a failure, and defeat was assured after terrible attrition to the once model republic; instead much-needed resourceful leaders such as Cmdt Fouché and Gen Malan wasted their energies in the Cape Colony in a losing battle that contributed little to the Republican war effort overall.

Like all wars the South African War reaped its own legacy of hate and resentment. As the Cape rebel was a British citizen, he was not party to the Treaty of Vereeniging, and many of them felt that this was a betrayal of all they had sacrificed for the Boer Republics. Nevertheless the rebels laid down arms as ordered by their burgher officers, and there was no attempt to continue a hopeless fight. The burghers of the former republics returned home, while the rebels continued to face charges before various courts. There are however more reports of anger against the Free Staters after the General Amnesty of 1906 than bitterness against the British or colonial forces. Hidden away and often forgotten was the casual cruelty meted out to blacks by rebels during the South African War. But their deaths cast long shadows and were not forgotten by their people; they added to the cross-colour tensions in South Africa.

The exit of British troops from South Africa was a relief to all its inhabitants. A certain amount of compensation was paid out. As far as colonial society was concerned, the rebel and the loyalist returned to their districts, and as time is the great healer the once bitter divisions between English and Afrikaner gradually eroded as fresh events overtook the political scene, and the South African War eventually became yet another stirring event in local history.

In what way has the study of the Cape rebel been advanced by this dissertation? He has been viewed from the Cape colonial point of view, and not as an automatic recruit to the Boer forces. The rebel is not seen specifically as a hero or a martyr, a victor or a loser, but a sum of all those parts. The

³ CAR, AG 2062, Folio 391, return prepared at the request of G Sprigg, nd.

	CENSUS 1891		A/G2106 of 1903				REBEL RECORD 2004				
Cape Colony District	Total 1901 Population	Total White Population	Estimated White Males	Rebels	% of White Males	% of White Pop	% of Total Pop	Rebels	% of White Males	% of White Pop	% of Total Pop
KAROO											
Beaufort West	9239	3875	1938	6	0.3	0.2	0.1	28	1.4	0.7	0.3
Britstown & De Aar				20				41			
Carnarvon	9132	3733	1867	63	3.4	1.7	0.7	107	5.7	2.9	1.2
Fraserburg & Williston	6907	3528	1764	286	16.2	8.1	4.1	346	19.6	9.8	5.0
Prince Albert and Laingsburg	7046	3716	1858	29	1.6	0.8	0.4	51	2.7	1.4	0.7
Sutherland	4012	2191	1096	119	10.9	5.4	3.0	131	12.0	6.0	3.3
Victoria West	7220	3406	1703	55	3.2	1.6	0.8	76	4.5	2.2	1.1
Totals	43556	20449	10225	578	5.7	2.8	1.3	780	7.6	3.8	1.8
NORTH-EAST CAPE											
Albert [Burghersdorp] and Venterstad	16649	8193	4097	976	23.8	11.9	5.9	1048	25.6	12.8	6.3
Aliwal North and Lady Grey	9963	4661	2331	975	41.8	20.9	9.8	1268	54.4	27.2	12.7
Barkly East	8207	4092	2046	838	41.0	20.5	10.2	372	18.2	9.1	4.5
Herschel	25059	193	97	2	2.1	1.0	0.0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Molteno								77			
Wodehouse [Dordrecht]	9036	5399	2700	744	27.6	13.8	8.2	849	31.5	15.7	9.4
Totals	68914	22538	11269	3535	31.4	15.7	5.1	3614	32.1	16.0	5.2
NORTH-WEST CAPE											
Gordonia [Upington]				269				339			
Kenhardt				678				766			
Kuruman				184				236			
Totals				1131				1341			

court system has been dealt with in detail, and the manner in which the severity of the sentences escalated as a response to new incursions has been discussed. The rebel's life as a prisoner-of-war has been reviewed.

This dissertation is important for those who study the historiography of the South African War or wars of insurgency, and is important to those who study family history. Perhaps it also highlights the ease with which events in our history are eclipsed when the past is looked at only from a stereotypical point of view.

The centenary of the South African War

The centenary of the South African War was commemorated in the southern Cape by the George Anglo-Boer War Society over the two and half year period under the chairmanship of Peter Greeff. An outstanding exhibition of photographs of Boer commandos and of colonial forces (Taute Scouts) was displayed in the George Museum, with photographs of the wider war, and was viewed by all sections of the community. A similar society flourished in Oudtshoorn under Professor Johan Olivier, where different versions of the past were presented without the slightest rivalry. People in Knysna, Oudtshoorn, Uniondale and in Prince Albert, produced publications and organized outings. Families of rebels and burghers who had been traced, told their stories, as did descendants of loyalists, in an atmosphere where a shared narrative was possible.

ADDENDUM 1

CAPE REBEL STATISTICS ACCORDING TO DISTRICTS- BASED ON THE 1891 CENSUS¹

Cape Colony District	CENSUS 1891		A/G2106 of 1903					REBEL RECORD 2004			
	Total 1901 Population	Total White Population	Estimated White Males	Rebels	% of White Males	% of White Pop	% of Total Pop	Rebels	% of White Males	% of White Pop	% of Total Pop
MIDLANDS											
Aberdeen	6535	3106	1553	145	9.3	4.7	2.2	228	14.7	7.3	3.5
Cradock & Maraisburg	15049	6517	3259	222	6.8	3.4	1.5	502	15.4	7.7	3.3
Graaff-Reinet	16378	6202	3101	87	2.8	1.4	0.5	189	6.1	3.0	1.2
Hanover	4301	1850	925	14	1.5	0.8	0.3	26	2.8	1.4	0.6
Jansenville	9370	4170	2085	68	3.3	1.6	0.7	83	4.0	2.0	0.9
Middelburg	9689	4042	2021	109	5.4	2.7	1.1	264	13.1	6.5	2.7
Murraysburg	4453	1498	749	46	6.1	3.1	1.0	66	8.8	4.4	1.5
Richmond	7246	2868	1434	13	0.9	0.5	0.2	54	3.8	1.9	0.7
Somerset East and Pearston	19007	6740	3370	89	2.6	1.3	0.5	151	4.5	2.2	0.8
Steynsburg	7052	2676	1338	86	6.4	3.2	1.2	194	14.5	7.2	2.8
Steytlerville								4			
Totals	99080	39669	19835	879	4.4	2.2	0.9	1761	8.9	4.4	1.8
EASTERN CAPE											
Albany [Grahamstown]	23377	9391	4696	4	0.1	0.0	0.0	15	0.3	0.2	0.1
Alexandria	10005	2417	1209	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1	0.1	0.0	0.0
Bathurst	9197	1833	917	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Bedford	11682	2301	1151	23	2.0	1.0	0.2	34	3.0	1.5	0.3
Cathcart	6881	2119	1060	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0
East London	21538	7197	3599	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2	0.1	0.0	0.0
Fort Beaufort and Adelaide	14675	3135	1568	4	0.3	0.1	0.0	7	0.4	0.2	0.0
King William's Town	86983	8605	4303	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Komgha	6941	1345	673	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Peddie	16525	1458	729	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Queenstown and Sterkstroom	43895	6458	3229	9	0.3	0.1	0.0	27	0.8	0.4	0.1
Stockenstrom	7776	1660	830	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2	0.2	0.1	0.0
Stutterheim	8651	1967	984	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3	0.3	0.2	0.0
Tarka	7443	3149	1575	82	5.2	2.6	1.1	153	9.7	4.9	2.1
Victoria East [Alice]	8875	1242	621	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Totals	284444	54277	27139	122	0.4	0.2	0.0	244	0.9	0.4	0.1

¹ CAR, CCP 10/6 1891, Statistical Register; CAR, AG 2106; Shearing, 'The Rebel Record'.

	CENSUS 1891			A/G2106 of 1903				REBEL RECORD 2004			
Cape Colony District	Total 1901 Population	Total White Population	Estimated White Males	Rebels	% of White Males	% of White Pop	% of Total Pop	Rebels	% of White Males	% of White Pop	% of Total Pop
SOUTHERN CAPE											
George	10086	4957	2479	18	0.7	0.4	0.2	11	0.4	0.2	0.1
Humansdorp	11846	4130	2065	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3	0.1	0.1	0.0
Knysna	6931	3710	1855	1	0.1	0.0	0.0	8	0.4	0.2	0.1
Ladismith	6704	3652	1826	14	0.8	0.4	0.2	13	0.7	0.4	0.2
Mossel Bay	7286	3445	1723	1	0.1	0.0	0.0	3	0.2	0.1	0.0
Oudtshoorn and Calitzdorp	23870	11576	5788	26	0.4	0.2	0.1	42	0.7	0.4	0.2
Port Elizabeth	25408	13939	6970	3	0.0	0.0	0.0	5	0.1	0.0	0.0
Riversdale	11366	6203	3102	1	0.0	0.0	0.0	8	0.3	0.1	0.1
Robertson and Montagu	11348	6019	3010	4	0.1	0.1	0.0	7	0.2	0.1	0.1
Swellendam	11256	5585	2793	12	0.4	0.2	0.1	4	0.1	0.1	0.0
Uitenhage	20947	7185	3593	6	0.2	0.1	0.0	9	0.3	0.1	0.0
Uniondale	8415	3927	1964	59	3.0	1.5	0.7	66	3.4	1.7	0.8
Willowmore	9036	4342	2171	45	2.1	1.0	0.5	64	2.9	1.5	0.7
Totals	164499	78670	39335	190	0.5	0.2	0.1	243	0.6	0.3	0.1
NORTHERN CAPE											
Colesberg	8288	3464	1732	399	23.0	11.5	4.8	514	29.7	14.8	6.2
Hopetown	6500	3038	1519	42	2.8	1.4	0.6	57	3.8	1.9	0.9
Philipstown	6846	3214	1607	44	2.7	1.4	0.6	59	3.7	1.8	0.9
Prieska	4302	2019	1010	480	47.5	23.8	11.2	569	56.4	28.2	13.2
Totals	25936	11735	5868	965	16.4	8.2	3.7	1199	20.4	10.2	4.6

Cape Colony District	CENSUS 1891		A/G2106 of 1903					REBEL RECORD 2004			
	Total 1901 Population	Total White Population	Estimated White Males	Rebels	% of White Males	% of White Pop	% of Total Pop	Rebels	% of White Males	% of White Pop	% of Total Pop
WESTERN CAPE											
Bredasdorp	6607	3271	1636	1	0.1	0.0	0.0	4	0.2	0.1	0.1
Caledon	12192	5821	2911	3	0.1	0.1	0.0	7	0.2	0.1	0.1
Calvinia	12255	5050	2525	445	17.6	8.8	3.6	486	19.2	9.6	4.0
Cape	97283	48544	24272	3	0.0	0.0	0.0	10	0.0	0.0	0.0
Ceres	5973	2488	1244	52	4.2	2.1	0.9	70	5.6	2.8	1.2
Clanwilliam	11568	4473	2237	115	5.1	2.6	1.0	175	7.8	3.9	1.5
Malmesbury and Hopefield	23328	10120	5060	87	1.7	0.9	0.4	101	2.0	1.0	0.4
Namaqualand [Springbokfontein]	16945	3718	1859	245	13.2	6.6	1.4	199	10.7	5.4	1.2
Paarl+Wellington	21363	8226	4113	6	0.1	0.1	0.0	31	0.8	0.4	0.1
Piquetberg	11587	6515	3258	182	5.6	2.8	1.6	234	7.2	3.6	2.0
Simon's Town								5			
Stellenbosch and Somerset West	12780	4420	2210	6	0.3	0.1	0.0	52	2.4	1.2	0.4
Tulbagh	5654	1865	933	1	0.1	0.1	0.0	4	0.4	0.2	0.1
Van Rhynsdorp				126				150			
Worcester	12615	5085	2543	8	0.3	0.2	0.1	5	0.2	0.1	0.0
Totals	250150	109596	54798	1280	2.3	1.2	0.5	1533	2.8	1.4	0.6
GRIQUALAND WEST											
Barkly West and Klipdam	17487	3404	1702	789	46.4	23.2	4.5	1255	73.7	36.9	7.2
Hay [Griquatown]	8508	3526	1763	811	46.0	23.0	9.5	936	53.1	26.5	11.0
Herbert [Douglas]	9074	2434	1217	526	43.2	21.6	5.8	625	51.4	25.7	6.9
Kimberley and Beaconsfield	48306	20306	10153	368	3.6	1.8	0.8	423	4.2	2.1	0.9
Mafeking				139				156			
Taung				40				62			
Vryburg				762				975			
Totals	83375	29670	14835	3435	23.2	11.6	4.1	4432	29.9	14.9	5.3

Cape Colony District	CENSUS 1891		A/G2106 of 1903				REBEL RECORD 2004				
	Total	Total	Estimated	Rebels	% of	% of	% of	Rebels	% of	% of	% of
	1901 Population	White Population	White Males		White Males	White Pop	White Pop		White Males	White Pop	Total Pop
DIVISIONAL COURTS IN NATIVE TERRITORIES											
East Griqualand				22				35			
Glen Grey [Lady Frere]	153563	1019	510	2	0.4	0.2	0.0	5	1.0	0.5	0.0
Kokstad				0				1			
Mienyani								1			
Pondoland											
Tembuland (Elliot)				2				67			
Transkei											
Totals	153563	1019	510	26	5.1	2.6	0.0	109	21.4	10.7	0.1
EXTRAS											
Address Cape Colony								191			
Address Unknown				64				458			
"Possible Rebels"								293			
TOTALS											
Midlands	99080	39669	19835	879	4.4	2.2	0.9	1761	8.9	4.4	1.8
Eastern Cape	284444	54277	27139	122	0.4	0.2	0.0	244	0.9	0.4	0.1
Karoo	43556	20449	10225	578	5.7	2.8	1.3	780	7.6	3.8	1.8
North-East Cape	68914	22538	11269	3535	31.0	16.0	5.1	3614	32.1	16.0	5.2
North-West Cape				1131				1341			
Southern Cape	164499	78670	39335	190	0.5	0.2	0.1	243	0.6	0.3	0.1
Northern Cape	25936	11735	5868	965	16.0	8.2	3.7	1199	20.4	10.2	4.6
Western Cape	250150	109596	54798	1280	2.3	1.2	0.5	1533	2.8	1.4	0.6
Griqualand West	83375	29670	14835	3435	23.0	12.0	4.1	4432	29.9	14.9	5.3
Native Territories	153563	1019	510	26	5.1	2.6	0.0	109	21.4	10.7	0.1
Extras				64				942			
Grand Total	1173517	367623	183813	12205	3.3	6.6	1.0	16198	8.8	4.4	1.4

Notes:

1. White males were estimated as 50% of the White population.
2. The percentages under AG2106 of 1903 are derived from the Census of 1891.
3. The percentages under the Rebel Record are derived from the Census of 1891.
4. The Rebel Record is an unpublished database collected by David and Taffy Shearing. In these columns the percentages are of the relevant numbers in the Census of 1891.

ADDENDUM 2

CAPE REBEL STATISTICS ACCORDING TO DISTRICTS - BASED ON THE 1904 CENSUS¹

Cape Colony District	CENSUS 1904		A/G2106 of 1903					REBEL RECORD 2004			
	Total 1901 Population	Total White Population	Estimated White Males	Rebels	% of White Males	% of White Pop	% of Total Pop	Rebels	% of White Males	% of White Pop	% of Total Pop
MIDLANDS											
Aberdeen	8353	4431	2216	145	6.5	3.3	1.7	228	10.3	5.1	2.7
Craddock & Maraisburg	18803	7721	3861	222	5.8	2.9	1.2	502	13.0	6.5	2.7
Graaff-Reinet	20216	7830	3915	87	2.2	1.1	0.4	189	4.8	2.4	0.9
Hanover	3822	1888	944	14	1.5	0.7	0.4	26	2.8	1.4	0.7
Jansenville	11336	5188	2594	68	2.6	1.3	0.6	83	3.2	1.6	0.7
Middelburg	20289	10173	5087	109	2.1	1.1	0.5	264	5.2	2.6	1.3
Murraysburg	3564	1619	810	46	5.7	2.8	1.3	66	8.2	4.1	1.9
Richmond	4881	1802	901	13	1.4	0.7	0.3	54	6.0	3.0	1.1
Somerset East and Pearston	22399	7843	3922	89	2.3	1.1	0.4	151	3.9	1.9	0.7
Steynsburg	6162	2994	1497	86	5.7	2.9	1.4	194	13.0	6.5	3.1
Steytlerville								4			
Totals	119825	51489	25745	879	3.4	1.7	0.7	1761	6.8	3.4	1.5
EASTERN CAPE											
Albany [Grahamstown]	29875	10475	5238	4	0.1	0.0	0.0	15	0.3	0.1	0.1
Alexandria	10846	2606	1303	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1	0.1	0.0	0.0
Bathurst	10751	2014	1007	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Bedford	13189	2337	1169	23	2.0	1.0	0.2	34	2.9	1.5	0.3
Cathcart	11468	2628	1314	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0
East London	49721	19793	9897	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2	0.0	0.0	0.0
Fort Beaufort and Adelaide	19956	3699	1850	4	0.2	0.1	0.0	7	0.4	0.2	0.0
King William's Town	103784	10250	5125	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Komgha	14708	1642	821	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Peddie	19739	1379	690	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Queenstown and Sterkstroom	36128	8685	4343	9	0.2	0.1	0.0	27	0.6	0.3	0.1
Stockenstrom	9895	1868	934	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2	0.2	0.1	0.0
Stutterheim	12281	2207	1104	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3	0.3	0.1	0.0
Tarka	9461	3350	1675	82	4.9	2.4	0.9	153	9.1	4.6	1.6
Victoria East [Alice]	17120	1574	787	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Totals	368922	74507	37254	122	0.3	0.2	0.0	244	0.7	0.3	0.1

¹ CAR, CCP 10/19 1904, Statistical Register; CAR, AG 2106; Shearing, 'The Rebel Record'.

Cape Colony District	CENSUS 1904		A/G2106 of 1903					REBEL RECORD 2004			
	Total 1901 Population	Total White Population	Estimated White Males	Rebels	% of White Males	% of White Pop	% of Total Pop	Rebels	% of White Males	% of White Pop	% of Total Pop
KAROO											
Beaufort West	10762	4841	2421	6	0.2	0.1	0.1	28	1.2	0.6	0.3
Britstown & De Aar	9279	3688	1844	20	1.1	0.5	0.2	41	2.2	1.1	0.4
Carnarvon	5792	2746	1373	63	4.6	2.3	1.1	107	7.8	3.9	1.8
Fraserburg & Williston	6469	4119	2060	286	13.9	6.9	4.4	346	16.8	8.4	5.3
Prince Albert and Laingsburg	9344	5166	2583	29	1.1	0.6	0.3	51	2.0	1.0	0.5
Sutherland	4455	2829	1415	119	8.4	4.2	2.7	131	9.3	4.6	2.9
Victoria West	7554	3624	1812	55	3.0	1.5	0.7	76	4.2	2.1	1.0
Totals	53655	27013	13507	578	4.3	2.1	1.1	780	5.8	2.9	1.5
NORTH-EAST CAPE											
Albert [Burghersdorp] and Venterstad	13122	6394	3197	976	30.5	15.3	7.4	1048	32.8	16.4	8.0
Aliwal North and Lady Grey	14857	5969	2985	975	32.7	16.3	6.6	1268	42.5	21.2	8.5
Barkly East	8490	4303	2152	838	38.9	19.5	9.9	372	17.3	8.6	4.4
Herschel	36909	279	140	2	1.4	0.7	0.0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Molteno	9755	3485	1743		0.0	0.0	0.0	77	4.4	2.2	0.8
Wodehouse [Dordrecht]	21678	7024	3512	744	21.2	10.6	3.4	849	24.2	12.1	3.9
Totals	104811	27454	13727	3535	25.8	12.9	3.4	3614	26.3	13.2	3.4
NORTH-WEST CAPE											
Gordonia [Upington]	8811	1712	856	269	31.4	15.7	3.1	339	39.6	19.8	3.8
Kenhardt	6909	3901	1951	678	34.8	17.4	9.8	766	39.3	19.6	11.1
Kuruman				184				236			
Totals	15720	5613	2807	1131	40.3	20.1	7.2	1341	47.8	23.9	8.5

Cape Colony District	CENSUS 1904			A/G2106 of 1903				REBEL RECORD 2004			
	Total	Total	Estimated	Rebels	% of	% of	% of	Rebels	% of	% of	% of
	1901 Population	White	White		White	White	Total		White	White	Total
		Population	Males		Males	Pop	Pop		Males	Pop	Pop
SOUTHERN CAPE											
George	12667	6582	3291	18	0.5	0.3	0.1	11	0.3	0.2	0.1
Humansdorp	13999	5120	2560	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3	0.1	0.1	0.0
Knysna	9333	4621	2311	1	0.0	0.0	0.0	8	0.3	0.2	0.1
Ladismith	8676	4026	2013	14	0.7	0.3	0.2	13	0.6	0.3	0.1
Mossel Bay	10700	5265	2633	1	0.0	0.0	0.0	3	0.1	0.1	0.0
Oudtshoorn and	30398	15211	7606	26	0.3	0.2	0.1	42	0.6	0.3	0.1
Calitzdorp											
Port Elizabeth	46832	23892	11946	3	0.0	0.0	0.0	5	0.0	0.0	0.0
Riversdale	13719	7944	3972	1	0.0	0.0	0.0	8	0.2	0.1	0.1
Robertson and	15297	8446	4223	4	0.1	0.0	0.0	7	0.2	0.1	0.0
Montagu											
Swellendam	13885	7644	3822	12	0.3	0.2	0.1	4	0.1	0.1	0.0
Uitenhage	32020	12560	6280	6	0.1	0.0	0.0	9	0.1	0.1	0.0
Uniondale	9433	5057	2529	59	2.3	1.2	0.6	66	2.6	1.3	0.7
Willowmore	11889	5832	2916	45	1.5	0.8	0.4	64	2.2	1.1	0.5
Totals	228848	112200	56100	190	0.3	0.2	0.1	243	0.4	0.2	0.1
NORTHERN CAPE											
Colesberg	11716	4809	2405	399	16.6	8.3	3.4	514	21.4	10.7	4.4
Hopetown	6118	3125	1563	42	2.7	1.3	0.7	57	3.6	1.8	0.9
Philipstown	5743	3127	1564	44	2.8	1.4	0.8	59	3.8	1.9	1.0
Prieska	5676	2956	1478	480	32.5	16.2	8.5	569	38.5	19.2	10.0
Totals	29253	14017	7009	965	13.8	6.9	3.3	1199	17.1	8.6	4.1

Cape Colony District	CENSUS 1904			A/G2+F345106 of 1903				REBEL RECORD 2004			
	Total	Total	Estimated	Rebels	% of	% of	% of	Rebels	% of	% of	% of
	1901 Population	White	White		White	White	Total		White	White	Total
		Population	Males		Males	Pop	Pop		Males	Pop	Pop
DIVISIONAL COURTS IN NATIVE TERRITORIES											
East Griqualand	222685	5901	2951	22	0.7	0.4	0.0	35	1.2	0.6	0.0
Glen Grey [Lady Frere]	55107	690	345	2	0.6	0.3	0.0	5	1.4	0.7	0.0
Kokstad				0				1			
Mienyani				0				1			
Pondoland	202757	1113	557	0	0.0	0.0	0.0		0.0	0.0	0.0
Tembuland	231472	8056	4028	2	0.0	0.0	0.0	67	1.7	0.8	0.0
Transkei	177730	1707	854	0	0.0	0.0	0.0		0.0	0.0	0.0
Totals	889751	17467	8734	26	0.3	0.1	0.0	109	1.2	0.6	0.0
EXTRAS											
Address Cape Colony								191			
Address Unknown				64				458			
Walfisch Bay	997	144	72	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0
"Possible Rebels"								293			
TOTALS											
Midlands	119825	51489	25745	879	3.4	1.7	0.7	1761	6.8	3.4	1.5
Eastern Cape	368922	74507	37254	122	0.3	0.2	0.0	244	0.7	0.3	0.1
Karoo	53655	27013	13507	578	4.3	2.1	1.1	780	5.8	2.9	1.5
North-East Cape	104811	27454	13727	3535	25.8	12.9	3.4	3614	26.3	13.2	3.4
North-West Cape	15720	5613	2807	1131	40.3	20.1	7.2	1341	47.8	23.9	8.5
Southern Cape	228848	112200	56100	190	0.3	0.2	0.1	243	0.4	0.2	0.1
Northern Cape	29253	14017	7009	965	13.8	6.9	3.3	1199	17.1	8.6	4.1
Western Cape	413925	208651	104326	1280	1.2	0.6	0.3	1533	1.5	0.7	0.4
Griqualand West	184159	40226	20113	3435	17.1	8.5	1.9	4432	22.0	11.0	2.4
Native Territories	889751	17467	8734	26	0.3	0.1	0.0	109	1.2	0.6	0.0
Extras	997	144	72	64				942			
Grand Total	2409866	579741	318544	12205	3.8	2.1	0.5	16198	5.1	2.8	0.7

Notes:

1. Increase in population between 1891 and 1904 in the Cape Colony as bounded in 1891:

Whites - 51.05%

Other races - 35.06%

2. White males were estimated as 50% of the White population.

3. The percentages under AG2106 of 1903 are derived from the Census of 1904.

4. The percentages under the Rebel Record are derived from the Census of 1904.

5. The Rebel Record is an unpublished database collected by David and Taffy Shearing. In these columns the percentages are of the relevant numbers in the Census of 1904.

Cape Colony District	CENSUS 1904			A/G2106 of 1903				REBEL RECORD 2004			
	Total 1901 Population	Total White Population	Estimated White Males	Rebels	% of White Males	% of White Pop	% of Total Pop	Rebels	% of White Males	% of White Pop	% of Total Pop
WESTERN CAPE											
Bredasdorp	7666	4264	2132	1	0.0	0.0	0.0	4	0.2	0.1	0.1
Caledon	15062	8345	4173	3	0.1	0.0	0.0	7	0.2	0.1	0.0
Calvinia	11776	5830	2915	445	15.3	7.6	3.8	486	16.7	8.3	4.1
Cape	213167	120475	60238	3	0.0	0.0	0.0	10	0.0	0.0	0.0
Ceres	6882	3360	1680	52	3.1	1.5	0.8	70	4.2	2.1	1.0
Clanwilliam	9843	4746	2373	115	4.8	2.4	1.2	175	7.4	3.7	1.8
Malmesbury and Hopefield	29954	13607	6804	87	1.3	0.6	0.3	101	1.5	0.7	0.3
Namaqualand [Springbokfontein]	20626	5004	2502	245	9.8	4.9	1.2	199	8.0	4.0	1.0
Paarl & Wellington	30423	12438	6219	6	0.1	0.0	0.0	31	0.5	0.2	0.1
Piquetberg	14434	8892	4446	182	4.1	2.0	1.3	234	5.3	2.6	1.6
Simon's Town			0					5			
Stellenbosch and Somerset West	22291	8672	4336	6	0.1	0.1	0.0	52	1.2	0.6	0.2
Tulbagh	7432	2311	1156	1	0.1	0.0	0.0	4	0.3	0.2	0.1
Van Rhynsdorp	5082	2733	1367	126	9.2	4.6	2.5	150	11.0	5.5	3.0
Worcester	19287	7974	3987	8	0.2	0.1	0.0	5	0.1	0.1	0.0
Totals	413925	208651	104326	1280	1.2	0.6	0.3	1533	1.5	0.7	0.4
GRIQUALAND WEST											
Barkly West and Klipdam	26300	4533	2267	789	34.8	17.4	3.0	1255	55.4	27.7	4.8
Hay [Griquatown]	10507	4779	2390	811	33.9	17.0	7.7	936	39.2	19.6	8.9
Herbert [Douglas]	11531	2858	1429	526	36.8	18.4	4.6	625	43.7	21.9	5.4
Kimberley and Beaconsfield	60160	20400	10200	368	3.6	1.8	0.6	423	4.1	2.1	0.7
Mafeking	21532	2516	1258	139	11.0	5.5	0.6	156	12.4	6.2	0.7
Taung				40				62			
Vryburg	54129	5140	2570	762	29.6	14.8	1.4	975	37.9	19.0	1.8
Totals	184159	40226	20113	3435	17.1	8.5	1.9	4432	22.0	11.0	2.4

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